New Vaccine Requirements for 2006

In the spring of 2006, national experts changed the recommendations for use of influenza and hepatitis A vaccines. This change comes from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Child care providers in Pennsylvania are required to document that enrolled children are up-to-date with the current national recommendations of the AAP and ACIP.

Young children have the highest infection rate for influenza and hepatitis A of any age group. Even those without symptoms can spread the infection to others. Infection with hepatitis A and influenza can make older children and adults very sick.

Vaccine Tools You Can Use:

⇒ Paying for the vaccines: Health insurance may cover them. If not, the Vaccines for Children Program (VFC) is expected to pay the cost of recommended vaccines for the uninsured. Even if people must pay for the vaccines themselves, they should do so for their protection.

⇒ Information sheets for families: The CDC has Vaccine Information Sheets (VIS) that explain the diseases and recommended vaccines in many languages. The VIS are posted at www.cdc.gov/nip under the heading “Frequently Asked For.” You can also link directly to them on the left panel of the WellCareTracker website at www.wellcaretracker.org. Look for, download and distribute newly updated VIS for hepatitis A and influenza.

⇒ A poster/flyer for child care providers: You can use the box in the left column as a notice to parents. You can copy and enlarge it to make a poster to put up at entrances. ECELS will let you know when other materials become available from the CDC. Sign up for E-Mail Alerts from ECELS to receive prompt notices about new developments at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org. Be sure to reply to the confirming e-mail you will receive after you sign up. This process makes sure that only those who want e-mail from ECELS receive it.

⇒ Sign-up to use WellCareTracker™ now. All you need to use this software is an Internet connection. It takes only 2-4 minutes per child to enter the data from the health forms families bring from their health care provider. Anytime thereafter you can get reports on which children are up-to-date with their vaccines, notices for families whose children need services, or a filled-in copy of the PA DOH form that facilities must complete mid-year. For a demonstration or to sign up for the service, go to www.wellcaretracker.org.
Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

More trouble from West Nile virus is expected this year. This disease spreads from mosquito bites of insects that previously had a blood feeding from an infected bird. While West Nile Virus commonly causes mild flu-like infections, more serious illness involving the brain can occur. Here are the steps that the PA Department of Health recommends to prevent mosquito bites that spread the disease:

- Stay indoors at dawn, dusk, and in the early evening.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants whenever you are outdoors.
- Apply insect repellent sparingly to exposed skin.
- Spray clothing with repellents containing permethrin or DEET to stop mosquitoes from biting through thin clothing. For 3-7 hours of protection against mosquitoes, use repellents that contain 25% DEET, between 5% and 10% Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or 2% soybean oil. Check the product labels for directions.
- If a child develops a rash or any other type of reaction from an insect repellent, stop using the repellent, and wash it off with mild soap and water. Call 800-222-1222 to reach your poison control center at any time for further guidance.

For a fact sheet on West Nile Virus disease, go to: [http://www.westnile.state.pa.us/](http://www.westnile.state.pa.us/).

Teach Water Safety

Drowning is the second leading cause of injury-related death for children between 1 and 14 years of age. Children under age one most often drown in bathtubs, buckets, or toilets. Preschool age children drown in home pools. As children get older, drowning occurs in open water areas such as ponds, lakes, and rivers. Often, children who drown have been unobserved for no more than 5 minutes.

The messages on water safety are easy to include in classroom and outdoor experiences with young children:

- Make sure a responsible adult is your “water watcher” and keeps an eye on you every minute when you play in or around water.
- Have a buddy when you play in or around water.
- Follow posted water safety rules at pools and wherever there is water, e.g. no running, no glass, and no horseplay.
- Check before you jump into water to be sure the water is deep enough and no hazards lurk where you are jumping.
- Avoid water that is too cold for comfort.
- Get out of the water when you begin to feel tired.
- Always wear a life-jacket when in a boat.
- Stay where you can get to a place to hold on or put your feet down.
- If someone needs help, throw a line or reach a pole to help. Don’t go in yourself.

For more information, go to these websites:
[http://www.usa.safekids.org/water](http://www.usa.safekids.org/water)
[http://www.drowningpreventionalliance.com](http://www.drowningpreventionalliance.com)

Free Health and Safety Posters

The California Childcare Health Program has a series of 8-1/2” x 11” health and safety posters for early education and child care. Print them out and put them up where activities occur that are shown on the posters or high traffic areas in the facility. For example, use the diaper changing poster over changing tables. The posters are free to download, and available in English and Spanish. Click on the tab “Publications & Resources” at [http://ucsfchildcarehealth.org](http://ucsfchildcarehealth.org). Then choose “Survival Tips Posters” on the left pane.