
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Protecting Children and Infants in our Community

National Infant Immunization Week

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) in partnership with the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance proudly participates in National Infant Immunization Week during the last week of April. The week highlights the importance of protecting children two years and younger in our community from vaccine-preventable diseases.

"Parents want to strive to make sure their children are healthy and protected," said GTCHD Communicable Disease and Immunization Supervisor Jacalyn Money-Bruno, MPH, BS, RN, CIC. "Giving babies the recommended vaccines is the best way to protect them from serious childhood diseases like whooping cough (pertussis) and measles."

According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#), childhood vaccination is important because it helps provide immunity before babies and children are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. Many infants and kids are behind on routine vaccinations, which puts them and others at risk of getting a disease.

"Vaccines help protect both individuals and communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases," said GTCHD Medical Director Najibah Rehman, MD, MPH. "Infants and children have developing immune systems that can fight off germs they encounter daily through food, air, or objects. However, some diseases require a more robust immune response to prevent severe illness, so vaccination is key as it's the time in a child's development that their immune system learns the most from the vaccine."

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, along with the AAP, and the American Academy of Family Physicians [provides a user-friendly immunization schedule for infants and children](#). Residents should check the schedule to see when each vaccine or series of shots is recommended for their child.

If a parent believes their child has missed any shots or needs to schedule an appointment, contact their primary care provider or call GTCHD at 231-995-6131. GTCHD offers no-cost vaccines through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program, bills most insurances, and has additional support to help cover the cost for families. No one will be turned away due to the inability to pay.

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