

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **State-Supplied vaccine changes start October 1st**
- **How to keep teeth healthy at Halloween**
- **Recycle your mercury thermostats at the Health Department**
- **Breastfeeding moms need community support**
- **New recommendations to keep children rear facing in car seats until 2 years of age**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Halloween– A Scary Time for Teeth** 2
- Disposal of Mercury Thermostats** 2
- Community Supported Breastfeeding** 3
- Keep Children Rear Facing Longer** 4
- Contact Information** 4

Wood County Health Department

# Public Health Press



OCTOBER, 2012

## Who Is Eligible for State-Supplied Vaccines?

Beginning October 1st, families with health insurance will need to schedule their children's vaccination appointments with their health care provider rather than at local health departments. A recent change in federal policy requires state-supplied vaccines to be targeted to children not covered by insurance.

Due to the state's widespread pertussis (whooping cough) outbreak, state-supplied pertussis vaccines will still be provided to any child visiting a local health department, regardless of whether or not they have insurance coverage. State-supplied seasonal influenza vaccine will also be available to all children during the 2012-2013 flu season.

Families with insurance that covers vaccinations should schedule appointments with their family physician, and those without insurance, or whose insurance does not cover immunizations, can still visit their local health departments to immunize their children. Parents should contact their insurance company, if they are uncertain whether or not their insurance covers vaccinations.

Children eligible for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, which provides publicly-purchased vaccines to children enrolled in or eligible for Medicaid and Badger Care (Forward Card), and Native Americans and Alaskans aged 18 and younger, can continue to receive immunizations from health departments and participating private healthcare providers.

Immunization is the best way to protect children from many diseases that are potentially harmful and sometimes deadly. Parents are encouraged to make sure children are up-to-date on their immunizations.

Health departments can continue to administer some state supplied vaccines to adults who have no insurance or have insurance that does not pay for vaccines. Adults should call their insurance company to determine whether or not the vaccine is paid for by their insurance before calling the health department for an appointment. During the pertussis outbreak, all adults regardless of insurance coverage, can continue to receive the Tdap (Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis) vaccine at local health departments. For questions, contact the Wood County Health Department at 715-421-8911 or 715-387-8646.

“Bacteria produce acids which attack the teeth for 20 minutes after contact”

## Halloween– A Scary Time for Teeth

Trick-or-Treating is a fun time for kids to get dressed up in costumes and bring home bags of candy from their neighbor’s. Unfortunately, some children get cavities from eating too much candy. There are ways to be able to enjoy the pleasures of childhood, like eating the candy collected at Halloween, and avoid tooth aches or a life time of dental problems.

Sugars can cling to teeth and form bacteria. Bacteria produce acids which attack the teeth for 20 minutes after contact. If children ate candy all day long, acids would be constantly attacking their teeth. When children eat some of their Halloween candy just before going to bed and forget to brush, the acids will attack the tooth enamel while they are sleeping.

Free reign to the Halloween treats may mean a constant diet of candy until it is gone. Instead, try to monitor when your child is allowed to have the candy. A safe time to eat candy is along with a meal of other foods. During mealtime, extra saliva is produced which helps to wash the sugars off teeth. If Halloween candy is allowed as a between meal snack, have your child follow with raw fruits or vegetables, cheese, nuts, sugar free gum, or at the very least, a glass of water. Of course, brushing with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth after treats is best.

Sticky candy such as taffy, caramels, or gummy bears will cling to teeth longer than a can of soda. Sour candies have both sugar and acid making them twice as bad for teeth. Hard candies and suckers take time to dissolve, meaning a longer acid attack on teeth.

To all the neighbors out there, it is acceptable to pass out non-candy items like fruit, pencils, sugar-free gum, or small toys for Halloween.

“Mercury in our environment causes a variety of physical, neurological, and developmental health problems”

## Disposal of Mercury Thermostats

Mercury in our environment causes a variety of physical, neurological, and developmental health problems in people. Improper disposal of mercury can lead to unintended exposure and lasting health consequences. If you have old mercury thermostats, prevent exposure and recycle them properly.

Mercury thermostats from individual homes can be brought to the Health Department office in Wisconsin Rapids at the Riverview Clinic Building, 420 Dewey St, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor during regular business hours. The thermostats must be double bagged in clear plastic bags and not broken or leaking mercury.



## Community Supported Breastfeeding

Many women choose to breastfeed their babies. Last year in Wisconsin, 73.7% of new moms breastfed their babies, but only 24.9% continued through their baby's first year. The United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strives to improve the health of both mothers and babies and has set goals for 81.9% of mothers to initiate breastfeeding and for at least 34.1% to continue through the first year.

A woman's ability to breastfeed successfully for the recommended duration of at least 12 months, and preferably to at least 24 months, depends on many factors. Breastfeeding is natural and the normal way to feed a baby, but sometimes moms and babies can have difficulties with breastfeeding. Having a good support system of family, the community, employers, and the health care system can help to overcome these difficulties.

A woman's ability to breastfeed successfully starts prenatally. During pregnancy, doctors should discuss breastfeeding with their patients and reassure the mother they are supportive of breastfeeding. A birth plan should be made that allows the mother to have their baby placed skin-to-skin

immediately after delivery and allow the baby to initiate breastfeeding. The mother should be encouraged to take a breastfeeding class prenatally, to prepare them to feed their baby and know what to expect in the hospital. There are International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) in our hospitals. IBCLCs in the hospital are available to help moms and babies initiate breastfeeding successfully and work through any difficulties they may be experiencing. When a mom is feeling overwhelmed or has questions about breastfeeding, they should not hesitate to get help from the hospital's IBCLC. It is important to encourage the mother to make a follow-up appointment with the hospital IBCLC for a couple days after being discharged from the hospital. After being discharged, there are many other IBCLCs and trained nurses in public health departments and WIC who can help and support breastfeeding moms. In Wood County, IBCLCs and public health nurses can be reached at 715-421-8911 and in WIC at 715-421-8950. WIC also provides a peer counseling program to moms who qualify for WIC. A peer counselor is a WIC mom who has successfully breastfed her baby for at least 6 months and serves as a support person for the new mom.

Coming together as professionals and bridging the gaps between services can provide mothers the support system needed to successfully breastfeed. For more information about Wood County lactation services and WIC, please contact Amber at the Wood County Health Department.



## Keep Children Rear-Facing Longer

Child restraint technology and rules are constantly changing. Currently, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends children remain in rear-facing car seats until age 2, or until they reach the maximum height or weight of the seat.

Dr. Marilyn Bull of the Department of Pediatrics, Indiana University School of Medicine, and Dr. Dennis Durbin of the Center for Injury Research and Prevention found that children are **five times safer riding rear-facing than forward-facing into the second year of life.**

Pediatricians are urged to follow these guidelines when counseling caregivers:

1. Recommend that children continue riding rear-facing until their second birthday, within the size and weight range of the convertible child restraint being used.
2. Assure parents it is a myth that leg injuries occur if the feet touch the back of the vehicle seat while rear-facing.
3. Encourage parents to seek the assistance of a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician for help with correct installation and use of their child's safety seat.



Please note, the current law in Wisconsin is to keep children rear-facing until they are at least 20lbs AND 1 year of age. This is a minimum safety standard and not the safest practice.

The Wood County Health Department has four certified child passenger safety technicians that can teach parents the proper way to install their child's seat and answer questions regarding child passenger safety. Technicians perform inspections by appointment and are available 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. In addition to free inspections, the health department also coordinates a child restraint program that provides restraints for low-income families that are currently receiving public assistance, such as WIC or Food Stamps, and a child restraint rental program available to anyone in need of a child restraint for a short period of time (2 week maximum rental term).

## Wood County Health Department

Wisconsin Rapids Office  
Riverview Clinic Building— 4th Floor  
420 Dewey St.  
P.O. Box 8080  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495

Phone: (715) 421-8911  
Fax: (715) 421-8962

Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Marshfield Office  
City Hall Plaza— 3rd Floor  
630 S. Central Ave., Suite 303  
Marshfield, WI 54449

Phone: (715) 387-8646  
Fax: (715) 389-1285

Hours: Call for appointment and clinic dates



[www.facebook.com/woodcountyhealth](http://www.facebook.com/woodcountyhealth)



[www.co.wood.wi.us/Departments/Health/](http://www.co.wood.wi.us/Departments/Health/)



[www.getactivewoodcounty.org](http://www.getactivewoodcounty.org)