Things Parents Should Know About Immunizations

What diseases do vaccines prevent?

Diphtheria	A respiratory disease that can lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure and even death.
Haemophilus Influenzae type B (HIB)	Causes meningitis, pneumonia, arthritis, skin and throat infections. Meningitis is an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings, which can lead to lasting brain damage and deafness.
Hepatitis A	A virus that infects the liver causing flu like illness, jaundice, severe stomach pains and diarrhea.
Hepatitis B	A virus that infects the liver that can lead to cirrhosis (liver damage) and/or liver cancer.
Human Papillomavirus (HPV)	A virus that infects the genital area (warts) and lining of the cervix, which can cause cervical and vulva cancer in women and other types of cancer in both men and women.
Influenza (Flu)	A highly contagious disease caused by the influenza virus spread by coughing, sneezing and nasal secretions.
Measles	A highly contagious respiratory disease with high fever, rash and cough. Can cause, pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, ear infections and/or deafness if severe.
Meningococcal Disease	A bacterial infection that can cause spinal meningitis and sepsis (blood infection). Symptoms are flu like and can become fatal within 2 days. Teens are particularly at high risk. Complications can be deafness, lose of arms or legs, seizures or strokes, mental retardation, and have problems with their nervous systems.
Mumps	Causes fever, headache, swollen glands that may cause deafness, meningitis or painful swelling of testicles/ovaries
Pertussis	Known as "whooping cough". Coughing so severe that it interferes with eating, drinking and breathing. Complications include pneumonia, convulsions, brain damage and even death.
Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV13)	Pneumococcal bacteria causes blood infections, pneumonia and meningitis, mostly in young children. Symptoms included headache, lethargy, vomiting, fever, seizures, deafness, brain damage and coma.
Polio	Mild cases cause fever, sore throat, headaches, stomachaches, neck and back stiffness. Severe cases lead to paralysis and death.
Rotavirus	An infection in the lining of the intestines causing vomiting/diarrhea. Common in young infants 6 to 24 mos of age
Rubella	Also known as German measles. Causes devastating birth defects if acquired by pregnant women.
Tetanus	A bacterial disease causing "lockjaw" that may lead to severe muscle spasms and require intensive hospitalization. Death occurs in 2 out of every 10 cases.
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	Highly contagious skin rash with the potential of hundreds of lesions. Complications are rare, but can lead to scaring, pneumonia, shingles (years later), brain damage, even death.

Why does my child need these vaccines, I have not heard of a case of polio in years?

The USA is very fortunate to have good compliance with vaccination of the population as a whole. Many of these diseases are rarely heard of in our country, however these diseases are not "extinct" in other parts of the world, therefore the threat of outbreak would be severe if we stopped vaccinations.

Are the vaccines safe?

Serious reactions to vaccines are extremely rare, but do occur. However the risks of serious disease from not vaccinating are far greater than the risks of serious reaction to the vaccination.

Are there any side effects after a shot?

Yes, some minor side effects can occur with any vaccination. A slight fever, rash or soreness at the injection site are the most common side effects. Some discomfort in the arm or leg of the injection site is normal and is no cause for alarm.

Where locally can I get vaccinations?

The Polk County Health Department, 330 North State Street, P.O. Box 316, Osceola, NE 68651, 402-747-2211, is currently licensed by the State of Nebraska to give immunizations.

Are vaccinations free anywhere?

The Polk County Health Department is part of the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, funded by the federal government, which provides most vaccines free of charge to children aged 0 through 18 years. A small donation is asked of those families who can pay to cover the costs of supplies, mailings, nursing time and other expenses that are not part of the federal grant.

Are there new requirements for school this year?

No. All 7th grade students are required to have a Tdap vaccination. The State of Nebraska is requiring all students to have two Varicella (Chicken Pox) vaccinations or parent report of having the disease.

Where can I get more information?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov/vaccines or 800-CDC-INFO
Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) www.immunize.org and/or Every Child by Two www.ecbt.org
American Academy of Pediatrics www.aap.org and/or The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia www.vaccine.chop.edu