



Vaccines protect us all

Vaccines protect everyone around us from dangerous and even deadly diseases. When was the last time you heard about a friend getting smallpox? You haven't, because the disease has been eradicated over time because people became vaccinated.

Vaccines help your body build immunities by exposing you to germs or bacteria that have been either killed or weakened so they won't make you sick. A vaccine stimulates your immune system to produce antibodies, like it would if you were exposed to the disease. After getting vaccinated, you develop immunity to that disease, without having to get the disease first.

"You might experience mild side effects for a few days, but vaccines don't cause illnesses. They prevent them," said Kathy Teeple, a public health nurse with Wood County Health Department.

This is what makes vaccines one of the most powerful tools to protect public health. Unlike most medicines, which treat or cure diseases, vaccines prevent them. Outside of a few very rare exceptions, vaccines are extremely safe. Although some parents are understandably concerned for their children's best interests, rest assured that studies have shown no link between vaccines and autism spectrum disorder. Vaccines can come with some side effects, but most are very mild and fade quickly.

April 27 through May 4 is National Infant Immunization Week. Ask your child's medical provider what shots they need at certain ages to help keep them safe from harmful diseases like chickenpox, measles and pertussis. Wood County Health Department provides vaccines for children ages 0 through 18 whose doctors do not offer them. For more information, call Wood County Health Department at 419-352-8402.

Vaccines aren't just for kids. A variety of vaccines are recommended for those traveling to certain areas of the world, and others, such as the shingles vaccine, are recommended for later in life, rather than childhood. Talk to your doctor or contact a pharmacy, as many now offer vaccines with no appointment required.

Anyone over 6 months old should get a flu shot every year, usually around October or November. Remember, immunizations can help keep you from getting sick, make an illness you do get less severe, and help protect others who cannot get vaccines, such as young children, older adults and those with certain medical conditions.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention