

# **Illinois Department of Public Health: make sure your child is fully immunized**

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**SPRINGFIELD** – Several mumps outbreaks around the state over the past couple years and a measles outbreak in 2015 in northern Illinois that affected mainly children too young to be fully immunized, are stark reminders of the importance of immunizations. During National Infant Immunization Week, April 22-29, 2017, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. is asking all parents to talk with a health care provider and make sure their children are fully immunized.

“Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death,” said Director Shah. “Because of the success of

vaccines, parents may not have heard of or seen the serious health effects caused by vaccine-preventable diseases, like polio. That is why it is important to follow the recommended immunization schedule to protect infants and children by providing immunity early in life, before they are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases.”

In the 1950's, nearly every child developed measles, and unfortunately, some even died from this serious disease. Today, many practicing physicians have never seen a case of measles due to the effectiveness of the vaccine. However, even when diseases are rare in the U.S., they can still be commonly transmitted in many parts of the world and brought into the country by unvaccinated individuals, putting other unvaccinated people at risk.

Vaccines not only help protect people who are vaccinated, but they also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases. Among children born during 1994-2013, vaccination will prevent an estimated 322 million illnesses, 21 million hospitalizations, and 732,000 deaths over the course of their lifetimes.

Currently, the U.S. has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in its history.

The Vaccines For Children (VFC) program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost for children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay. The VCF program helps children get their vaccines according to the recommended immunization schedule. More information about the [VFC program](#) and [immunizations](#) can be found on the IDPH website.