



Jefferson County PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

For Immediate Release

Faith Lustik
Health Planner -786-3723

Jefferson County Public Health Service Encourages Infant Immunization

April 23, 2014- Watertown, NY – This year marks the 20th anniversary of National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) and the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. VFC helps provide vaccines to children whose parents or guardians may not be able to afford them, and helps many more children have a better opportunity of getting their vaccines according to the recommended immunization schedule. The VFC program has contributed directly to a substantial increase in childhood immunization coverage levels and has made a significant contribution to the elimination of disparities in vaccination coverage among young children.

Because of the success of vaccines in preventing disease, parents may not have heard of some of today's vaccines or the serious diseases they prevent. Unfortunately, babies today still suffer from vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, whooping cough and the flu. These diseases can be especially serious for infants and young children. 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 Jefferson County **only 43.5% of children** by 35 months of age had completed their recommended immunization series (NYS Immunizations Information System 2012). Vaccine-preventable diseases still circulate in the United States so continued vaccination is necessary to protect everyone from potential outbreaks. Even when diseases are rare in the U.S., they can be brought into the country, putting unvaccinated children at risk.

Jefferson County Public Health Service reminds parents that giving babies the recommended immunizations by age two is the best way to protect them from 14 serious childhood diseases, like whooping cough and measles. Parents are encouraged to talk to their child's provider to ensure that their infant is up-to-date on immunizations.

Currently, the United States has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in its history. The United States' long-standing vaccine safety system ensures that vaccines are as safe as possible. As new information and science become available, this system is, and will continue to be, updated and improved. For more information about vaccines go to www.immunize.org/

