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Buchanan County Public Health Department Urges Parents to Schedule Well Child and Immunization Appointments Now

(Independence, IA) – As Iowans continue to push through the COVID-19 pandemic and maintain their new sense of normalcy, parents and guardians of school-aged children are reminded that annual physicals and back-to-school immunizations are still important.

According to a [report released by the Iowa Department of Public Health](#), since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, well child visits have declined significantly, causing a delay in required and recommended immunizations, health screenings, and referrals. Statewide, there was a 55.5% decrease in the administration of non-influenza vaccines to children ages 4-18 years during March and April 2020 compared to the same months in 2019. April had a 75.0% decrease from the previous year, while March had a 37.1% decrease. Compared to other child and adult age categories, the largest percent differences were among 11-12 year olds and 13-18 year olds.

“Declining immunization rates can cause additional health challenges for our children and second outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases in our community,” said Buchanan County Public Health Director Tai Burkhardt.

Your healthcare provider’s office setting may look a little different as we continue to keep our community safe from COVID-19. Clinics and hospitals throughout our community are taking many preventative measures to ensure the health and safety for all. Safety measures include:

- Screening patients and visitors upon entry into the hospital or clinic.
- Separating patients out spatially and/or limiting time spent in waiting areas.
- Scheduling routine visits and sick visits at different times of the day or different locations.
- Using virtual visits for non-urgent health concerns.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to schedule their children’s well visits, back-to-school and sports physicals now. Many children are required to have vaccines before entering school and without the proper medical documentation of vaccines; this can hinder students from starting school on time.



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“Take the time now and schedule your child’s well child and immunization appointment,” said Burkhart. “Our community relies on all of us for our health and well-being.”

For more information on childhood immunizations, please visit
<https://idph.iowa.gov/immtb/immunization>

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