



Immunizations Who Needs 'EM.....

....."we all do!" Why? Because certain diseases are on the increase across the country and especially in Washington State. Recent outbreaks of Pertussis or Whooping Cough have occurred in Grant County Washington in non-immunized individuals. There has been 118 cases of measles nationally in 2011 also in non-immunized people. Immunization rates nationally and locally have been declining for several reasons. Lets look at a couple of reasons why people do not immunize.

MYTH: "Vaccines cause autism".

FACT: About a decade ago a British physician published a paper linking measles vaccine to autism. Subsequent studies have absolutely proved this as false. His data was shown to be false, made up and infact his license to practice medicine was revoked because of this.

MYTH: "Vaccines can give us the diseases we are trying to prevent".

FACT: In the past some vaccines such as, Polio vaccine were made with live viruses. Today vaccines are made with attenuated, or "dead viruses" that cannot cause infection, they stimulate the body's immune system to prevent the disease. This includes the flu vaccine.

People today are not concerned about diseases that in the past used to be prevalent such as small pox and polio which have been eliminated because of vaccinations. Other diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus have been reduced by over 99%.

Immunity against infectious diseases requires "herd immunity". This means that over 90% of the population needs to be immune against a disease. Washington State is 'last in the nation' in immunization rates and, pockets of our population are only 75% vaccinated. The un-vaccinated can then harbor the disease and pass it on to others as happened in Grant County with the recent whooping cough outbreak. The very young, the very old, those with compromised immune systems, such as cancer patients are most vulnerable.

School age children are required to have an initial series of vaccinations. In the past parents have been able to 'opt out' of having their children vaccinated by telling the schools they did not want their children immunized for any reason. A new Washington State law now requires a statement signed by a health care provider allowing children to attend school without proper immunization.

So that's why we all need immunizations. If you have any questions, please contact the Ritzville Medical Clinic.