



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

It's National Infant Immunization Week

**Public Health Provides Hundreds of Infant Immunizations
Each Year in Champaign County**

The last week of April is National Infant Immunization Week, an annual observance that highlights immunizations as an important way to protect children from a dozen potentially life-threatening diseases.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) launched the second decade of the observance this week, and hailed immunization as one of the ten great public health achievements of the 20th century.

- In March of this year the CDC reported that rubella is no longer a major health threat to expectant mothers and their unborn children, thanks to immunizations.
- April, 2005 marks the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the polio vaccine. In 1955, the Illinois state legislature passed a \$1 million emergency appropriation to buy and freely distribute the Salk polio vaccine. The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District began polio vaccinations the same year.
- Today the world is free of smallpox; polio could soon be eradicated worldwide; rubella, once a major cause of birth defects, has been eliminated in the U.S.; and diseases and death from diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, hepatitis B, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b are at or near record lows.

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District and the Champaign County Public Health Department are leading providers of infant immunizations in Champaign County. Between April 1, 2004 and March 31, 2005, the Health District gave more than 400 immunizations to 276 infants up to one year of age.

The Champaign County Public Health Department provides funds for immunizations to adults and children who live in Champaign County but outside Champaign-Urbana. About 36 percent of the child immunizations administered in the last year went to county residents.

“We are now protecting children from a dozen vaccine preventable diseases,” said Public Health Administrator Dave King. “Thousands of children have been vaccinated over the years in Champaign County, and countless cases of disease, disability and death have been prevented.”

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