HEALTH MATTERS NEWSLETTER
AUGUST 2021

National Immunization Awareness Month
#ivax2protect

IMMUNIZATION AWARENESSS

Breastfeeding Awareness Month

National WIC Breastfeeding Week
#WICBREASTFEEDING

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AND DISEASES REPORT

NEW PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

Healthy Families Santa Barbara County

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www.sbcphd.org
This August, National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) raises awareness to encourage everyone to ensure they are current on the necessary vaccinations. Simply call your doctor to schedule your vaccine appointment.

**Immunization protects our children**
Vaccination helps provide immunity before children are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases and protects children from serious illness as well as complications of many diseases, including amputation of an arm or leg, paralysis of limbs, hearing loss, convulsions, brain damage, and death.

**Immunization is safe**
Vaccination is safe and effective. All vaccines undergo long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and the federal government to make sure they are safe.

**We owe it to everyone**
We all have a public health obligation to our communities to protect ourselves as well as others from potential health risks. By getting vaccinated, we eliminate diseases before they have a chance to spread.

**How to Observe National Immunization Awareness Month**

- **Call your doctor:** request your immunization records to determine whether or not you are up to date.

- **Talk about it:** Encourage loved ones to know their vaccination records.

- **Know your family history:** A family medical history can help a doctor identify patterns that might be relevant to your own health. This will allow the doctor to be best informed about recommending vaccines for immunization.

During NIAM, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (SBCPHD) recommends residents of all ages get vaccinated and protected from vaccine-preventable diseases!

**Santa Barbara County Immunization Program**
Telephone: (805)346-8420
PHDIZ@sbcphd.org
Breastfeeding Awareness Month promotes and support breastfeeding as the best source of nutrition for a baby’s first year of life. Breast milk is normal nutrition for infants. Each week has a different topic of focus.

**Week 1:** World Breastfeeding Week and National WIC Breastfeeding Week
See how [Santa Barbara WIC](https://www.santabarbarawic.org) is celebrating!

**Week 2:** Native Breastfeeding Week

**Week 3:** Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Breastfeeding Week

**Week 4:** Black Breastfeeding Week

To learn more in depth about these topics and organizations, [click here](https://www.santabarbarawic.org).

**Breastfeeding and The COVID-19 Vaccine**

According to the CDC, “Recent reports have shown that breastfeeding people who have received COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have antibodies in their breastmilk, which could help protect their babies.” Lactating people can receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

[Click here for more information on the CDC’s website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/breastfeeding.html).
Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health (MCAH) is pleased to announce Healthy Families Santa Barbara County, a voluntary program that provides intensive in-home services and equips parents with the tools and resources needed to create strong, lifelong relationships with their children. Developed over 25 years, Healthy Families America® (HFA) is one of the leading family support and evidence-based home visiting programs in the United States. HFA’s approach is relationship-based, culturally respectful, family-centered, and grounded in the parallel process.

The relationships built with parents and families serve as a model for the supportive relationships they will cultivate with their children.

Some benefits shown in rigorous studies:
- Improved school readiness and adjustment,
- reduced child abuse and neglect,
- an increase in family functioning and self-sufficiency,
- and broad health and fiscal benefits

A child's first relationships and earliest experiences lay the foundation for health and well-being throughout their entire lives.

To learn more about the new HFA program, please call the Santa Barbara County Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Program toll-free at 1-800-288-8145.

Sexually Transmitted Infections & Diseases

Now available on the epidemiology webpage is the updated five-year Sexually Transmitted Infections Report for Santa Barbara County (SBC). Early syphilis and gonorrhea rates have been on the rise over the last 5 years as chlamydia has remained steady, although continuing to be the highest incidence of any of the reported diseases to the health department. HIV rates have been relatively stable as well. The most recent year in the report, 2020, saw a decline in all incidence rates potentially due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to healthcare/screening and effects on social interaction.

The PHD monitors reported sexually transmitted diseases in real time. The first three months of 2021 saw an alarming increase in gonorrhea and early syphilis in California and the Central Coast region which encompasses Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. When the analysts drilled down to the county-level, the increases were not actually seen in SBC. In the first quarter of 2021, compared to previous first quarters of years past, SBC saw a decrease across all four sexually transmitted infections/diseases. Delays in diagnoses may play a role in the smaller reported numbers. The PHD will continue to monitor cases and keep the community informed of any concerning findings and enlist community partners in prevention efforts when needed.

Epidemiology inquiries, email: PHDEpiUnit@sbcphd.org
The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is calling on healthcare providers to Talk, Test, and Treat:

**TALK** - Providing the best medical care possible means talking to your patients about sexual health.
- Taking a sexual history should be part of routine care.
- Create an environment that is open to an honest discussion around your patient’s sexual history—success in this area can garner important information that will allow you to provide the best care possible.
- Counsel your patients on safe sex, and ensure that they know about today’s many prevention options. With condoms, hepatitis B and HPV vaccines, and HIV PrEP – there have never been more ways for your patients to protect themselves.
- [California Dear Colleague Letter – HIV PrEP](https://www.nphic.org/niam)

**TEST** - Test your patients for STDs as recommended.
- [California STD Screening Recommendations](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/images/message-graphics/OnTime_1080x1080_FB-IG.png)
- All adults and adolescents from age 13 to age 64 should be tested at least once for HIV
  - Repeat screening of high-risk individuals should be done annually, or every 3-6 months, as indicated by risk

**TREAT**- Follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) STD Treatment Guidelines to ensure appropriate treatment and care.
- [CDC’s STD Treatment Guidelines](https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/) to make sure patients get successful treatment and care.

### REFERENCES

- [https://www.nphic.org/niam](https://www.nphic.org/niam)
- [https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/images/message-graphics/OnTime_1080x1080_FB-IG.png](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/images/message-graphics/OnTime_1080x1080_FB-IG.png)
- [https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/](https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/)

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