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Vaccines help protect us

IH Wide – During National Immunization Awareness Week (April 24 – 30), Interior Health encourages individuals and families to stay on track with their immunizations.

“It is hard to imagine a world without vaccines,” said Dr. Fatemeh Sabet, Interior Health medical health officer. “I am so grateful for having access to a simple tool that has saved millions of lives and prevented serious consequences of so many vaccine preventable communicable diseases.”

Vaccines are available to protect against a variety of diseases such as cervical cancer, influenza, whooping cough, meningitis, chickenpox and hepatitis.

In B.C., young children are offered vaccines at two, four, six, 12, and 18 months of age. As children get older and begin school, vaccinations continue to be offered. This is to help children develop protection against vaccine preventable diseases. Some vaccinations need booster doses as children enter their teens.

Vaccines help protect us. For example, the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is available to all children starting in grade six to protect against infection from types of HPV that cause certain cancers, such as cervical and mouth cancers. A 2019 study showed that the HPV vaccine cut the rate of early stages of cervical cancer by more than half in B.C.

The need for vaccinations does not stop after childhood years. There are many vaccines recommended for adults. All adults in B.C. can get a booster of tetanus and diphtheria vaccine every 10 years. If you missed your basic series in childhood, depending on your health, age and other risk factors, you could be eligible for certain vaccines.

“The single most important factor that helped us reduce risk of severe impacts from COVID-19 and get back to living in a safer environment has been vaccination,” said Dr. Sabet. “I am so thankful to everyone who stood up and played their part in protecting themselves and our communities by getting vaccinated.”

Visit the [Immunizations & Vaccines page](#) for information on important immunizations for infants, children, adults, the elderly as well as immunizations for pregnant women and for travel. Contact your [local health unit](#) to speak to a public health nurse if you have questions about vaccines or getting your immunizations up to date.

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