



## HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

---

### Are you Ready for School?

Prepared September 2011

Back pack? Check. New school supplies? Check. New clothes, shoes? Check. Up to date on immunizations? Duh!

#### Did you know that certain vaccines are required for entry into school or child care?

The reason for this requirement is that when kids attend school, along with learning facts and figures, children also learn to interact and socialize. Some of what they share with each other may be germs that can make them very ill.

For older Americans, we remember the days when we or our friends had measles, whooping cough, even polio. Chicken pox once was very common among kids, but is not seen much any more. The reason is that over the years, vaccines have changed the landscape for vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccines are an effective way to decrease the burden of diseases in a population.

So why do we still need vaccines when there are so very few cases of these diseases around now? Although we rarely see these diseases in the US, we still see them occasionally when people return from travel overseas. Travel has made it so much easier to move people and things from one place to another within hours or days. Keeping your immunizations current protects you whenever you encounter these germs. In order to protect our communities, enough of us need to have immunity so that diseases will not “take hold” in our area and cause epidemics.

As we prepare to send our kids back to school, we need to make sure that they can be as prepared as possible. The Thurston County Medical Reserve Corps, Group Health Cooperative and the Thurston County Public Health Department are teaming up to provide a “no cost” back-to-school immunization clinic for Thurston County students entering pre-school up to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We are providing this service to address the needs of school children who may not have access to a regular medical provider for their immunizations. Immunizations are generally available at local pharmacies for patients who are over the age of 14.

The clinic will be held at **Group Health Olympia Clinic on 700 Lilly Rd NE, from 10 am – 2 pm, Saturday, September 17, 2011.**

- A parent or legal guardian must accompany children.
- Please bring immunization records and any available insurance information. No one will be denied services because of lack of insurance.
- For more information about this clinic, call 360-709-3080 or on the web at [www.co.thurston.wa.us/health](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health)

---

Dr. Diana Yu is the Health Officer for the  
Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department  
[www.co.thurston.wa.us/health](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health)  
360-867-2500