

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

When in Doubt, Find Out!

Hillsdale, MI. When your little one complains of a sore tummy, it's hard to know why or what to do. It could be something they ate. It could be hunger. Or maybe it's just a cry for a little extra attention? To help parents answer these questions, the Great Start Collaborative of Hillsdale County teamed up with the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, Head Start, and the Health Care Institute to sponsor a free training designed to help parents better care for their children when they are sick!

According to Kelley Mapes, health educator from the tri-county health department and one of the event's organizers, "This training was geared towards helping parents learn how to better protect their children from accidents and injuries; when to call a doctor; and when and how to use over-the-counter medicines." Over 40 participants completed the April 17th training held at the health department. As part of the event, each family received a goody bag filled with first aid related items and two books titled: "*What To Do When Your Child Gets Sick*" and "*What to Do for Healthy Teeth.*"

Jo Ann Wilczynski, Prevention Services Director added "These books emphasize a common sense approach to caring for your children. More often than not, children will fight off whatever bug they've got. Equally important, however, is knowing which symptoms are more serious and do require a doctor's visit." The following list of symptoms merit a trip to the doctor:

- High or persistent fever
- Any breathing problems, such as fast, labored or noisy breathing from the chest
- Persistent pain such as an earache, sore throat, severe headache or stomach ache

- Eye discharge that is thick, sticks the eyelids shut, and doesn't get better during the day
- Frequent vomiting or diarrhea and isn't able to keep down enough liquids to produce urine at least once every six to eight hours -- this could be a sign of dehydration.
- Vomit or diarrhea that contains blood.
- A stiff neck, extreme lack of energy or the illness seems to be getting worse rather than staying the same for more than four to five days.
- Known exposure to a contagious illness such as mono, influenza or chickenpox or which occur after the child has recently travelled out of the country.

Another way to put your mind to rest about serious health issues is to keep all of your children up to date on their immunizations. Vaccinations are safe and effective and will protect your whole family from diseases like chicken pox and the flu. The following chart shows when your child should receive their next dose:

Immunization	Birth	2 Mos.	4 Mos.	6 Mos.	6-15 Mos.	12-15 Mos.	4-6 Yrs.
Hepatitis B (Hep B)	X	X			X		
Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP)		X	X	X		X	X
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type B (Hib)		X	X	X		X	
Inactivated Polio		X	X		X		X
Pneumococcal (PCV)		X	X	X		X	
Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)						X	X
Varicella or Chickenpox (VZV)						X	

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency offers immunization free of charge to families with children age 18 or younger, who are uninsured or whose insurance does not cover immunizations through the health department's Vaccines for Children program (VFC). The health department offers immunization clinics once a week at each of its county offices:

- Branch County on Mondays
- Hillsdale County on Wednesdays
- St. Joseph County on Tuesdays

Please contact the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency county office to schedule an appointment or go to our website at www.bhsj.org to view the recommended vaccination schedule specific to your child's age. Remember: walk-ins are always accepted!

Whether it's learning the difference between the common cold and something more serious or learning how to protect your children from serious diseases through immunizations, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is here to help. To learn more about our services, check out our website at www.bhsj.org.

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