



Are You Ready?

SEPTEMBER 2006

WASHINGTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

**KEEPING
OUR
CHILDREN
SAFE**

Are You Ready?

Is a series of handouts designed to assist you and your family to plan ahead for emergencies.



For more information on **Keeping Our Children Safe** Check out these helpful websites:



www.washhealth.org



Washington County
Emergency Services/
Emergency Management
33 W. Washington St.
Hagerstown, MD 21740
240-313-2930



www.fema.gov



www.ready.gov



www.redcross.org



www.hhs.gov



www.whitehouse.gov

Keeping Our Children Safe

Helping Children Prepare for an Emergency

Preparing for an emergency helps everyone in the family accept the fact that emergencies or a disaster can happen and that they can do something about it. Families should work together to get prepared and be ready if an emergency does happen. One way to help children feel more confident and in control is to involve them in preparing a family disaster plan. When people feel prepared, they can cope better. Take the following action steps with your family:

1. Get informed
2. Create a family disaster plan and practice it
3. Assemble an emergency supplies kit
4. Encourage your children to talk and take part in planning and preparing activities

What Parents and Caregivers Can Do

It is important for parents and other caregivers to understand what is causing a child's anxieties and fears. Following a disaster, children are most afraid that the event will happen again, someone close to them will be killed or injured or that they will be left alone or separated from their family. Parents and caregivers can clarify misunderstandings of risk and danger by acknowledging children's concerns. Discussions of preparedness plans can strengthen a child's sense of safety and security.

Visit these web sites for more information; www.redcross.org, www.fema.gov, www.ready.gov and www.ready.gov/kids

Immunizations For Back to School

Get Immunized

Getting immunizations is easy, inexpensive, and can save lives. Make sure your children get immunizations as recommended by your health care provider, CDC, and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Did you know that in the United States measles and diphtheria used to kill thousands of people a year? Or that in 1952, 20,000 people were crippled from polio? We might think we do not have to worry about these diseases today because, thanks to vaccines, we do not see them nearly as often as we used to. But they're still around and they're still dangerous.

What is an Immunization?

Sometimes immunizations are called vaccinations or just shots, and they help our body fight diseases.

How Does it Work?

First: a vaccine is given by a shot

Next: over the next few weeks the body makes antibodies and memory cells against the weakened or dead germs in the vaccine

Then: the antibodies can fight the real disease germs if the person is exposed to the germs and they invade the body. The antibodies will help destroy the germs and the person will not become ill.

Finally: antibodies and memory cells stay on guard in the body for years after the vaccination to safeguard it from the real disease germs.

You should keep your immunization records up to date and in a safe place. Whenever you take your child for their immunizations take their record along so that the vaccines can be recorded by the health care providers.

Check out the following web sites for more information: www.cdc.org and www.washhealth.org



An Ounce of Prevention

Back To School Safety Tips

School is back in session. Let's keep our children safe. Talk with your children about the following topics:

Riding the Bus

- ☞ Have a safe place to wait for your bus.
- ☞ Stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop.
- ☞ Keep a safe distance between you and the bus. The bus driver can see you better if you are at least ten giant steps away from the bus.
- ☞ Use the handrail to enter and exit the bus.
- ☞ Carry everything in a backpack so that you won't drop anything.
- ☞ Keep aisles clear.
- ☞ Stay in your seat.
- ☞ Never put your head, arms or hands out of the window.
- ☞ Speak quietly on the bus so the driver will not be distracted.

Walking and Biking to School

- ☞ Obey all traffic signals.
- ☞ Walk with a buddy.
- ☞ Walk your bike through intersections.
- ☞ Wear reflective clothing.

Riding in a Car

- ☞ Wear your seat belt.
- ☞ Do not ride in the front seat if under the age of 13.
- ☞ If you drive, don't speed and obey all traffic rules.

