



## Knox County Health Department

140 Dameron Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **KCHD and ETCH urge parents to ensure kids' vaccinations are up to date**

*Knoxville, Tenn.* — As routine childhood vaccinations have declined across the U.S. amid the pandemic, East Tennessee Children's Hospital and the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) are partnering to encourage parents to schedule their children's annual checkups and ensure vaccinations are up to date.

"Vaccines are widely considered one of the most well-researched and safe medical interventions available," said KCHD Senior Director Dr. Martha Buchanan. "While many may have delayed care due to their concerns about the pandemic, doctor's offices are safe places to visit. It's vital that parents use the summer break to catch up their children on any missed well visits or vaccinations."

"Our ability to prevent disease through vaccination is one of the greatest success stories in the history of medicine," explains Dr. Lori Patterson, director of Infection Control at Children's Hospital. "Every child born today is vulnerable until they are vaccinated. We have seen things like measles and whooping cough come roaring back when vaccine coverage wanes. The best way to protect the lives of our precious children is to vaccinate."

In addition to local pediatrician offices and many pharmacies, parents may make appointments for childhood immunizations at KCHD's main location, 140 Dameron Ave., on Wednesdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. by calling 865-215-5070 or its West Clinic, 1028 Old Cedar Bluff, on Mondays and Thursdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. by calling 865-215-5950.

As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and numerous other national medical organizations, immunizations are vital in protecting children from potentially serious diseases. The CDC estimates vaccination of children born between 1994 and 2018 will prevent more than 26 million hospitalizations, 936,000 deaths and save nearly \$1.9 trillion in total societal costs. More information and recommendations for parents can be found on the American Academy of Pediatrics' website: [Healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org).

In addition to recommended vaccines, all students entering preschool, kindergarten or seventh grade and those entering a Tennessee school for the first time in the fall should provide their child's school with a state immunization certificate, which documents receipt of vaccinations. Certificates should be turned into schools by the first day of school in August. Both the immunizations and certificates are available at pediatrician offices or KCHD's main location. More information, including contact information for KCHD and a list of the recommended vaccinations by grade level, is available on KCHD's website at [knoxcounty.org/health](https://www.knoxcounty.org/health).

### **About Knox County Health Department**

As the first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. KCHD investigates disease outbreaks, identifies community health threats, conducts extensive outreach and education, prepares for public health emergencies, provides and connects the public with medical care, enforces food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit [www.knoxcounty.org/health](https://www.knoxcounty.org/health).

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