

EUROPEAN IMMUNIZATION WEEK 23-29 APRIL 2018

Communications package



European
Immunization
Week
Prevent Protect Immunize

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Background

Vaccination is a life-long investment in children's health and well-being. Thanks to vaccines, most children and adults in the European Region are immune to measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and polio. An increasing number are also vaccinated against pneumococcal bacteria, human papillomavirus and hepatitis B virus to prevent severe forms of disease and cancers these microbes can cause.

Unfortunately the benefits of vaccines are spread unevenly in the European Region, with far too many children missing the protection they deserve. 1 in 15 infants in the European Region missed their first measles-containing vaccine in 2016 and 1 in 21 did not receive all recommended doses of vaccines against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis. Uptake of HPV vaccines is still below 50% in some countries.

The cost of not vaccinating is clear. Gaps in immunization coverage are an open door for contagious diseases, allowing them to spread among those who are not vaccinated. Every year thousands of measles cases are detected in this Region and many still suffer unnecessarily from mumps and pertussis. In 2017, the Regional Certification Commission for polio eradication determined that 3 countries in the Region are at risk of a polio outbreak. Most sexually active women and men will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives. Among those who are not immunized, HPV infection can cause genital warts or lead to various forms of cancer.

Objective

The objective of European Immunization Week (EIW) 2018 is to sustain momentum toward a European Region free of vaccine-preventable diseases by raising awareness of the importance of vaccination as an individual right and a shared responsibility.

In conjunction with other regional initiatives and World Immunization Week, the European Region will utilize EIW 2018 as an opportunity to highlight how vaccines work to protect individuals and their communities and to help achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals.

The week will also be celebrated in other WHO regions and globally as World Immunization Week (WIW):

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/2018/world-immunization-week/en/>

THEME

Immunization is a right and a responsibility. Every person deserves to be protected from vaccine-preventable diseases and plays a vital role in protecting others by choosing to vaccinate.

**Tagline: Vaccines work to protect you and those around you from serious diseases
#Vaccineswork #immunizeEurope**

European Immunization Week 2018 activities and materials will seek to:

- raise awareness of how vaccines work to protect health, both for those who are vaccinated and, through herd immunity, for those who cannot be vaccinated;
- remind teens, parents and health care professionals to make evidence-informed choices about immunization and share only evidence-based information;
- make parents aware of the importance of keeping their family's immunizations up to date, for their own protection as well as for the protection of others;
- encourage health authorities and health professionals to raise awareness about vaccines to help sustain demand for vaccination.

KEY MESSAGES

This communications package is designed to support EIW stakeholders, by providing them with consistent messages with which to develop EIW materials and communicate with the media, health professionals, decision-makers and the general public.

Please select the messages that apply to your particular immunization priorities and/or challenges – or use alternative messages that are more relevant to your specific needs.

- #Vaccineswork to protect people of all ages from potentially dangerous diseases.
- Every person deserves to be protected from vaccine-preventable diseases and plays a vital role in protecting others by choosing to vaccinate.
- When all eligible individuals are fully vaccinated those who cannot be vaccinated are also protected through herd immunity.
- Consult with your doctor and check your family's immunization records to make sure that you are all fully protected.
- False information can influence choices and endanger lives. Get the facts and share only evidence-based information about vaccines.
- Health professionals are the most trusted source of information about vaccines for their patients. Raising awareness about vaccines saves lives.
- Equitable access to immunization is the right of every individual and community.
- Immunization helps us to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Immunization keeps us protected together.

More information on WHO recommendations for routine immunization are available on the WHO website:

http://www.who.int/immunization/policy/immunization_tables/en/

CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

HOW VACCINES WORK

Vaccines contain a small amount of virus or bacteria that doesn't cause disease, but that "teaches" your immune system what to do. You are now protected by the most powerful defence you've got - your immune system.

After you get vaccinated, your immune system responds and it starts to produce antibodies to fight off any possible virus or bacteria.

After vaccination your body remembers this specific infection and you are protected against it. Before it has the chance to make you sick.

Herd immunity

When you and many people else in your community are immune to a contagious disease, it cannot spread easily. Together you prevent the virus or bacteria from reaching those who cannot be vaccinated against it, including babies born young to the vaccine and individuals with health conditions or who are undergoing treatment that weakens their immune systems.

Do your part to #immunizeEurope!

#Vaccineswork to protect you and those around you
www.euro.who.int/vaccines

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Infographic I
How vaccines work

HERD IMMUNITY
Fighting measles is a **SHARED** responsibility

BEFORE VACCINES

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases affecting humans. Before vaccines were available, there was no way to stop the disease from spreading. Each time a contagious case exposed to the virus, nearly everyone who had not been infected before contracted the disease. Many suffered serious complications such as pneumonia, deafness, diarrhoea, and many died.

BUILDING THE HERD

Measles spreads easily. The higher the number of vulnerable individuals there are in a community, the higher the chance of infection and the risk of contracting the disease. As more and more people are vaccinated, it becomes more difficult for the virus to find someone new to infect.

PROTECTION FOR ALL

Thanks to the measles vaccine, the number of measles cases in the WHO European Region has dropped by over 90% since the 1960s. But the virus still spreads whenever it can find enough people to infect. By stopping the chain of infection, vaccinated children and adults prevent the virus from spreading to people too young to be vaccinated and people who cannot be vaccinated because of medical or religious reasons. As less 90% vaccination coverage is needed to achieve herd immunity protection for all.

Do your part to #immunizeEurope!

#Vaccineswork to protect you and those around you
www.euro.who.int/vaccines

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Infographic II
Herd Immunity: fighting measles is a shared responsibility

MEASLES is a highly contagious and **serious** disease

Measles **REMAINS A THREAT** in the WHO European Region

2017: 21 315 cases
2016: 5279 cases

DID YOU KNOW...

- Measles is **6 TIMES** more infectious than influenza.
- Measles spreads quickly within and across communities unless herd immunity is sustained.
- Measles causes severe disease or complications, such as ear infection, pneumonia, permanent deafness, encephalitis or even death.
- Two doses of measles vaccines provide nearly 100% protection against measles.

YOU CAN STOP MEASLES

Do your part to #immunizeEurope

#Vaccineswork to protect you and those around you
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Infographic III
Measles

RUBELLA is a contagious disease that can lead to miscarriage, early delivery or birth defects

Babies of unvaccinated women remain at risk as long as rubella is circulating anywhere in the WHO European Region

DID YOU KNOW...

- 9 out of 10 women infected with the rubella virus early in pregnancy will lose their baby, or will be born with congenital rubella syndrome.
- Children born with congenital rubella syndrome can suffer from brain damage, hearing impairment, eye and heart defects.
- Rubella vaccines are safe and effective. They protect against testing and have a very good safety record after nearly 50 years of use.
- Vaccination provides nearly 100% protection against rubella, and can help to eliminate rubella in the European Region.

YOU CAN STOP RUBELLA

Protect the next generation by making sure you and your family are fully vaccinated.

Do your part to #immunizeEurope!

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Infographic IV
Rubella

#Vaccineswork
to protect you and those around you from serious diseases

Do your part to #immunizeEurope

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Poster

RESOURCES

The WHO Regional Office for Europe encourages immunization stakeholders at national and local levels to get involved in EIW by joining or organizing campaigns. The following resources, available at <http://www.euro.who.int/eiw2018>, can help you get started in the weeks leading up to EIW 2018.

- Background document: Why is EIW important?
- EIW guidelines for planning, PR and working with the media
- EIW meeting folders, posters and other materials
- Information materials for health workers and the general public
- Advocacy tools for policy-makers and health authorities

Global materials with the “Vaccines work” theme are available on the WHO headquarters website:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/2018/world-immunization-week/en/>

CONNECT

To promote your EIW initiatives, see what is being planned near you and connect with other EIW stakeholders, visit the Immunize Europe Forum:

www.immunize-europe.org

For more information please contact
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