

Don't Put Off Important Childhood Check-Ups and Immunizations

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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As the COVID-19 pandemic has shut down large segments of the U.S. through stay-at-home orders, there is growing concern that important medical procedures, like childhood immunizations, are being missed.

With renewed attention to immunizations as work continues to develop a COVID-19 vaccine, providers acknowledge there may be concern bringing your child to a primary care or pediatrician's office for a well-child visit.

OSF HealthCare providers understand that concern, and want to assure parents they are taking precautions to protect their child's health.

"We want all those people to feel safe that they can be coming in. We will work with families if they have some fears with that but really our office we will take all the precautions that everybody else is taking with COVID and making sure that if you come in for vaccinations or you come in for any sort of office visit that we will provide a safe atmosphere for that."

Deshon is a pediatric Advanced Practice Nurse at OSF HealthCare who stresses the importance of regular vaccinations as part of her practice. She is also involved with the United Nations Foundation initiative called Shot@Life which lobbies Congress to fund vaccine support for children in impoverished parts of the world.

According to Deshon, 1 in 5 children in the world does not have access to vaccines, and every 20 seconds a child dies from a disease that can be prevent through vaccination. For instance, in 2018 more than 10-million cases of measles were reported worldwide resulting in more than 140,000 deaths, including 6,000 children. There was a surge in measles cases in the U.S. in 2019 due to a growing number of parents not vaccinating their children.

It's that potential resurgence of diseases that were thought to be eradicated or close to it – and are potentially deadly – that worries Deshon.

"We will make sure that those kids that come in for well checks are not being exposed to kids that are ill. We really encourage those parents to be coming in to get all their childhood vaccinations because we know if we don't then it just opens up the door for measles, for mumps, for pertussis, for chickenpox, all those things that we have worked so hard with our vaccination efforts to not see."

Deshon is hopeful there will eventually be a vaccine for COVID-19. She says the data she's seeing shows children aren't as affected by the virus, but many are asymptomatic. That's why it will be even more important for children to be vaccinated.

"We give the vaccine to kids for COVID and then it's just going pass on and really be protecting, if they are asymptomatic which a lot of those studies have shown, they really that are going to be protecting those elderly or those people that are really at risk for mortality related to COVID."

According to Deshon, immunizations are recognized as one of the most successful and cost-effective health interventions. The World Health Organization observes [World Immunization Week](#) the last week of April.