When you choose not to vaccinate your child, know the risks and your responsibilities as a parent

Niagara Region Public Health recommends vaccination of both children and adults. Choosing not to vaccinate is not just about YOUR child. Your family, your child’s friends and their families, and the residents of Niagara can all be affected by your decision not to vaccinate your child or yourself.

If you do not vaccinate your child, please keep the following in mind:

- **If your child is sick and needs medical attention, you must tell any health care provider your child sees that he/she has not received his/her vaccinations** (Ex. Family doctor, walk in clinic, hospital/emergency room, ambulance or dentist)
- **Other children and adults who cannot receive vaccines** could be exposed to a highly contagious disease and become deathly ill (Ex. someone with cancer, a weakened immune system or pregnant women)
- **Your child’s immunization record will not be reviewed** every year by Public Health unless in the event of a community outbreak
- **Your child cannot go to school or daycare** in the event of a community outbreak
- **If you plan to travel outside of Canada**, you put your child at higher risk of getting dangerous diseases that are very contagious. Because of international travel, these diseases are now only a plane ride away.
- Students going to summer camps or participating in volunteer work usually need to have an up to date immunization record

It is okay for you or your child to change his/her mind later and receive his/her complete set of vaccinations. Remember, the series of vaccines must follow the Ontario immunization schedule. This can take months, or even years to complete. A student entering a college or university program for a career that deals with the public (medical, education, police etc.) is required to have an up to date immunization record. Students who do not have an up to date immunization record may not be able to register for their program.

Learn the early signs and symptoms of all vaccine preventable diseases. Just because you do not always hear about cases of vaccine preventable diseases in Canada, outbreaks do happen. With so many people travelling around the world and fewer people choosing to vaccinate, you cannot rely on herd immunity. Niagara often experiences cases of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Speak to Niagara Region Public Health or your health care provider if you have any questions. The decision to vaccinate your child is an important one; make sure you are well informed.

Niagara Region Public Health
Vaccine Preventable Disease Program
905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7425
www.niagararegion.ca/health

August 2013