

The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

August 2023

Be up to date with immunizations

Delawareans can be protected from many diseases by staying up to date with their immunizations, beginning by visiting their health care provider. August is National Immunization Awareness Month, an observance that highlights the importance of routine vaccination for people of all ages.

As parents and guardians prepare to send children back to school, the Division of Public Health (DPH) advises to get updated immunization records from the Delaware Immunization Program or the health care provider. When children's routine vaccinations are current, they stay healthy, in school, and ready to learn. First-year college students living in residential housing and individuals with HIV and other conditions need to be up to date, especially with the Meningococcal vaccine.

Since Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) is still with us, it is important to get vaccinated with the new composition of the COVID-19 vaccine in the fall. The new composition of the COVID-19 vaccine is to counter the currently circulating variants. Watch for news about this vaccine.



To avoid influenza ("the flu") and its potentially severe complications, all eligible Delawareans need to be immunized with the flu

vaccine every year. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends getting flu vaccinations before the end of October for the best protection as influenza activity increases.

Visit de.gov/immunizations for vaccine schedules or take the Adult or Childhood Vaccine Quiz at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/index.html>. To contact the Delaware Immunization Program, call 1-800-282-8672 weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.



Family SHADE names grant awardees

Three organizations are each receiving \$25,000 through the Statewide [Family SHADE](#) (Support Healthcare Alliance Delaware) Mini-Grant Program. [The Parent Information Center of Delaware](#) (PIC) manages the mini-grant program, made possible by the [Delaware Department of Health and Social Services](#), Division of Public Health's Maternal and Child Health program.

The 2023-2024 mini grant recipients are:

- [The Children's Beach House](#), to expand its Youth Development Program, which gives children opportunities to develop close and supportive relationships with peers and caring adult role models, so they feel safe, loved, and at home in the world. The year-round program offers support and activities for children ages 7 to 18 who have a diagnosed speech, language, hearing, or communicative delay or disability, have an Individual Education Plan, and come from under-resourced homes.
- [Down Syndrome Association of Delaware](#), to work alongside the families of over 150 youth who are younger than 17 and have Down syndrome. Families will be referred to the Down syndrome Program at Nemours, which helps families of children with Down syndrome create medical homes by connecting them with specialists and professionals who work collaboratively with parents and caregivers.
- [Teach Zen Incorporated](#), to improve the emotional well-being of early childhood educators and children ages 3 to 5 of low-income families who are enrolled in early childhood education programs. Social Emotional Learning and self-regulation techniques will be taught to them.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health

Nemours Children's Health offers free dog safety program

In 2022, 1,135 dog bites were reported in Delaware, according to the Division of Public Health. Many bites go unreported.

During the warmer months, Nemours Children's Hospital in Wilmington treats on average one dog bite patient daily, according to their Trauma Program's Injury Prevention Coordinator, Jennifer McCue, RRT, BSEd, CPST.

Dog bites can be devastating and disfiguring to children, who suffer bites to the head and neck because of their shorter stature. When trauma and plastic surgeons requested dog bite prevention materials, McCue created a dog safety program for kids, a video, and a tip card in English and Spanish. Filmed by Nemours, the video teaches children ages 4 to 7 years and older how to properly act around dogs. It is presented as a story with kid-friendly illustrations.



Jennifer McCue of Nemours Children's Health, right, created a dog safety program for kids, a video, and a tip card. Facility dog Ali and handler Kelsey Cebula sometimes join her at in-person trainings. Submitted photo.

Nemours offers the video at no cost at these links:

- English: <https://youtu.be/tiDdDxjsHCg>
- Spanish: <https://youtu.be/nYwpq9uoLrA>

McCue presents her free dog safety program to children in person or virtually within Nemours' service area: Delaware, southeast Pennsylvania, northern Maryland, and southern New Jersey. In person, she reads huge story cards and leads a game. Nemours' facility dog, Ali, sometimes joins her. Kids receive a certificate, tip card, bookmark, color-changing pencil, and dog pencil eraser.



Scan this QR Code for the dog safety video.

To request more information or schedule a free program, contact McCue at 302-651-6733 or Jennifer.McCue@nemours.org.

For additional dog prevention tips, visit the [Delaware Office of Animal Welfare](#).

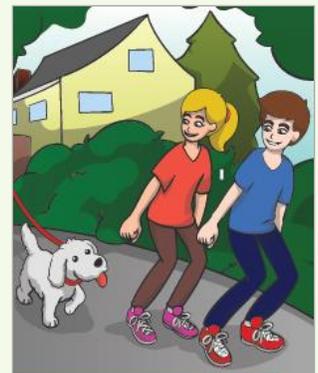
How to avoid dog bites

Many children who suffer dog bites know the biting dog. Supervision is the best way to prevent dog bites. Never leave a child unattended with a dog, even the family dog.

Teach children how to properly interact with dogs:

- Do not approach dogs who show their teeth, are barking or growling, or who are sick or stressed. Dogs show stress by yawning, licking their lips, and showing the whites of their eyes.
- Stay away from dogs when they are playing with a toy or another dog, and when they are eating, sleeping, in their crate, hiding, or nursing puppies.
- Leave a dog alone if its owner is not there or if the dog is behind a fence or tied up in a yard – even if you know the dog.
- Ask the dog owner for permission to pet the dog. Not all dogs like to be petted.
- If it is okay to pet the dog, stand quietly to its side and do not stare into its eyes. Make a closed fist and slowly reach it out for the dog to sniff. Let the dog come to you.
- Pet the dog on the side of its neck, chest, and body – never on the top of its head or on its tail. Always pet a dog in the direction that its fur grows.
- Avoid hugging or kissing the dog.
- Do not put your face close to the dog.
- Do not pet service dogs, which wear special vests or harnesses when they are working.
- If chased or attacked, stay still, cross your arms across your chest, and look at the ground so the dog gets bored and leaves.

If a person or dog gets bitten by a dog or was exposed to its blood or bodily fluids (such as saliva), immediately contact Delaware Animal Services at 302-255-4646.



Courtesy of Nemours