



Southeast District Health Department

Serving: Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, and Richardson Counties

601 J Street Auburn, Nebraska 68305
Phone: (877) 777-0424 or (402) 274-3993
Fax: (402) 274-3967 E-mail: sedhd@alltel.net

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For immediate release

Contact: Kay Oestmann, Director, Southeast District Health Department
877-777-0424

Health Department Recommends Tetanus Booster

Spring floods in Southeast Nebraska and the importance of adult tetanus immunity surrounding natural disasters, has influenced the Southeast District Health Department to promote adult tetanus boosters.

“Many adults in our District are unsure of when they were last immunized against tetanus,” stated Kay Oestmann, Director of the Southeast District Health Department. “Our children in this district have 92% immunization coverage at one year. Requirements for preschool, kindergarten and 7th grade keep children up to date. Not so with the adults,” Oestmann stated.

The department has contacted providers in the 5 county area asking them to review their patients’ adult immunization records, and if appropriate, encourage a tetanus booster during the upcoming flu shot season.

Tetanus is a disease of the nervous system caused by a bacterium that enters the body through a break in the skin. Contrary to common belief, tetanus doesn’t just come from rusty nails, but may also be caused by lacerations and cuts, animal bites, surgical wounds, scrapes and splinters, injectable drug use, and body piercings and tattoos. The bacteria are present in dust, soil and manure. Most tetanus deaths occur in persons 60 years and older.

“We are encouraging everyone in the Southeast District to know when they had their last tetanus shot and get a booster if it has been 10 years,” Oestmann said, “by partnering with the providers and our residents, we can control this vaccine preventable disease.”