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NUMBER: 17-13
FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

DATE: 8/15/2017
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A Healthy Start: Pregnancy and Vaccines

National Immunization Awareness Month is a reminder that we all need vaccines throughout our lives.

During pregnancy, you are often thinking about baby names, nursery colors, and prenatal vitamins, but you should also be thinking about vaccines. Vaccines during pregnancy not only protect you against diseases, but you can also begin to pass some protection to your baby. This protection for your baby will last the first few months of life, until he or she is old enough to get vaccinated themselves and develop their own protection. Doctors and midwives routinely recommend two vaccines during your pregnancy, the pertussis or “whooping cough” vaccine (Tdap) and the flu shot.

To celebrate the importance of immunizations for a healthy start and throughout our lives – and to make sure everyone is protected with all the vaccines they need – the Stanislaus County Health Services Agency is recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

“Getting a flu shot is the best way to protect a pregnant woman from the illness and prevent serious flu-related problems, such as premature labor and delivery. And when you get a whooping cough vaccine, or Tdap, during each pregnancy, you’ll pass some antibodies that will help protect your baby for the first months of life,” said Dr. Julie Vaishampayan, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer. “That’s when babies are most vulnerable to the devastating complications associated with whooping cough and flu. I encourage pregnant women to talk to their OB-GYNs or midwives about these important vaccines.”

You can find out more about the vaccines recommended during pregnancy at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pregnancy/ or by talking to your doctor or midwife, or calling your local health department.

To find out which vaccines you need and where you can get vaccinated, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines> or <http://www.schsa.org/PublicHealth/pages/immunization> or call Stanislaus County Public Health at (209) 558-7700.

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