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**Local Clinic Demystifies Viruses and Vaccines during  
National Immunization Awareness Month**

*Clinic Sofia encourages women to ensure immunizations are up-to-date.*

MINNEAPOLIS (Aug. 18, 2016) — Do you know the difference between viruses and bacteria? Do you struggle with illness every winter? Have you ever asked your doctor for antibiotics for a bad cold? During National Immunization Awareness Month, [Clinic Sofia](#), a local OBGYN clinic known for empowering women to be advocates for their own health, reminds women to ensure their vaccinations are updated and to recognize the difference between viral and bacterial infections when illness occurs.

Sponsored by the National Public Health Information Coalition in concert with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Immunization Awareness Month highlights the value of immunizations for people of all ages to protect health and help prevent infectious diseases.

“There is a lot of misinformation out there when it comes to viruses and vaccines, which is why we strongly focus on educating our patients,” said Dr. Donna Block, founder of Clinic Sofia in Edina and Maple Grove. “While we don’t often think about getting sick during the warm, sunny days of August, cold and flu season are just around the corner, making this the perfect month to practice self-care and ensure that all family immunizations are up-to-date.”

**Role of Vaccines for Viral Infections**

A virus is a tiny microbe that usually causes disease. Unlike bacteria, viruses can’t replicate on their own – they need the host cell to grow. While many bacteria are beneficial to humans, most viruses are harmful, and since they aren’t technically alive, antibiotics can’t target and kill them – which is why your doctor won’t prescribe antibiotics for a bad cold. Unnecessarily using antibiotics can lead to drug-resistant bacteria known as superbugs that are very difficult to eradicate. Antibiotics don’t fight viral infections such as colds, flu, most sore throats, and even many ear and sinus infections.

(more)

Block explains the role of vaccines as they can target viruses by tricking the body into making antibodies. Typically, a very weak form of the virus that isn't strong enough to cause disease is introduced through an injection; the body doesn't recognize that it is a weakened form of the virus and makes antibodies in response. The antibodies destroy the weak virus and store memory cells that can recognize and attack the virus again.

### **What You Need to Know about Viruses:**

- 1) **Rest is best.** When you're sick, focus on rest, fluids and any over-the-counter products that alleviate your symptoms. Time is generally the best healer when it comes to viruses.
- 2) **You can get your flu vaccine as early as next month.** Seasonal flu activity can start as early as October, so it's never too early to request your annual vaccine. The CDC recommends the flu vaccine for everyone six months and older.
- 3) **Antibiotics will not cure a virus.** They won't help you feel better or prevent those around you from getting sick. However, they can cause unnecessary side effects and contribute to antibiotic resistance. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 2 million people are infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria every year, leading to serious health consequences.

In addition, Dr. Block encourages women to:

- **Be proactive about your health.** Whether you are concerned about flu season, HPV, the Zika virus or anything else, talk to your doctor and take the appropriate steps to keep yourself safe and healthy.
- **Slow down.** Even though this can be really difficult, living at a breakneck pace can contribute to stress, wear and tear on the body, and illness. Slowing down can create a sense of relief, give you the chance to live in the moment and cultivate gratitude.
- **Make and keep your medical appointments.** "This month of back-to-school provides a great reminder for making – and keeping – doctor, dentist and any other appointments for your health and well-being. The little things really add up when it comes to your long-term health," Dr. Block added.

### **About Clinic Sofia**

Clinic Sofia, a leading OB-GYN clinic with locations in Edina and Maple Grove, was founded in 2004 and is known for its personalized approach to healthcare that centers around giving women the tools, guidance and resources to help them stay healthy and happy. Today, Clinic Sofia serves thousands of women throughout the metro and is consistently ranked as one of the top OBGYN clinics in the area. For more information, please visit [www.clinicsofia.com](http://www.clinicsofia.com)

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