

## **Parent's Responsibilities and Risks if Choosing Vaccine Exemptions:**

- When signing an exemption form in Ontario, the parent needs to understand that:
  - Their child can remain at risk for several of the vaccine preventable diseases that they are not vaccinated against
  - If there is a vaccine preventable disease outbreak at the child's school, the child will need to be excluded until the outbreak is deemed over by the Medical Officer of Health, for the health and safety needs of the child
- Keep informed! Risks of not vaccinating your child are as follows:
  - Your child may spread disease to others that do not have a strong immune system, even if your child does not appear to be sick
  - If your child catches a vaccine preventable disease, they could become very sick
  - It is not possible to avoid all exposures to disease, as they are not all visible to the eye, and not always known
  - Any travel to other countries may put your child at risk, as there may be a higher rate of vaccine preventable diseases there, that your child has no immunity against
  - Even if we have not seen a disease here in a long time, it only takes one person to bring it to the area from another place, which can cause wide-spread illness, particularly to those who are not immune
  - Students who go to college and university programs will be required to have immunizations, depending on what program they are in. There are no exemptions for these vaccines, and your child may not be able to complete program requirements without them
  - Attending summer camps, doing volunteer work or travelling to certain areas also may have mandatory vaccine requirements.

## **Changing your mind:**

- The exemption form that you fill out is entered into the province-wide Immunization database. You can change your mind at any time, and it can be taken out. Your child can then go on a schedule that will allow them to receive the recommended vaccines in doses specific to their age.

If you have questions, please call the health unit to speak with a nurse from the Vaccine Preventable Disease Team. 519-663-5317 ext.2330