

Immunization Hot Topics!

Helping Parents Who Question Vaccinations Issue 3 of 5



More patients and parents are questioning the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. Your responses to them require knowledge, tact, and time.

Common Vaccine Misconceptions

- Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine causes autism
- Giving an infant multiple vaccines can overwhelm their immune system
- It's better to space out vaccines using an alternative schedule
- Natural infection offers better immunity than being immunized
- Ingredients in vaccines are harmful
- Vaccines are not effective

A Guide to Address Vaccine Misconceptions

The parent's guide to childhood immunization is a 64-page guide introducing parents to 12 childhood diseases and the vaccines to protect children from them: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/parents-guide/>

Responding to Vaccine Misconceptions

Does the MMR vaccine cause autism? No! In 1998, a British researcher named Andrew Wakefield raised the notion that the MMR vaccine might cause autism. In the medical journal *The Lancet*, he reported the stories of eight children who developed autism and intestinal problems soon after receiving the MMR vaccine. To determine whether Wakefield's suspicion was correct, researchers performed a series of studies comparing hundreds of thousands of children who had received the MMR vaccine with hundreds of thousands who had never received the vaccine. They found that the risk

of autism was the same in both groups. The MMR vaccine didn't cause autism. Some parents who worried about the safety of MMR vaccine stopped getting their children immunized. As immunization rates dropped, particularly in the United Kingdom and, to some extent, the United States, outbreaks of measles and mumps led to hospitalizations and deaths that could have been prevented. *Vaccines and Autism: What You Should Know*, www.vaccine.chop.edu

Science-based Resources Available to Help Respond to Vaccine-hesitant Parents

- **Immunization Action Coalition**

- **Home Page:**
www.immunize.org
- **Reliable Sources of Immunization Information; Where Parents Can Go to Find Answers:**
<http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4012.pdf>
- **Vaccines Work:**
<http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4037.pdf>
- **Responding to Parents:**
<http://www.immunize.org/talking-about-vaccines/responding-to-parents.asp>

- **American Academy of Pediatrics**

- **Home Page:**
www.aap.org
- **Communicating with Families:**
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/immunizations/Pages/Communicating-with-Families.aspx>
- **Case Studies:**
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/immunizations/Pages/CaseStudies.aspx>

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

- **Home Page:**
www.cdc.gov/vaccines
- **If You Choose Not to Vaccinate Your Child, Understand the Risks and Responsibilities:**
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/downloads/not-vacc-risks-color-office.pdf>
- **Infant Immunizations FAQs**
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/parent-questions.html>

- **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**

- **Home Page:**
www.vaccine.chop.edu
- **Vaccine Q & A Sheets:**
<http://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/resources/vaccine-and-vaccine-safety-related-qa-sheets>
- **Vaccine Schedule: Altering the Schedule:**
<http://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-schedule/altering-the-schedule>

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