

As a doctor and a parent, my goal is to keep your children and my children healthy. Researching health and medical treatment is not easy. I have spent my entire adult life dedicated to learning about the human body--two degrees in Biology, and a Medical Doctorate--and I still learn every day. With vaccination, the fact is that other than public sanitation (sewers, clean water), ***nothing we can do even comes close to immunization when it comes to preventing illness and death.***

What is immunization? Basically, it's a kind of medicine (usually, but not always, in the form of a shot, called a vaccine) that teaches your body's immune system how to fight certain illnesses long before you are ever exposed to them. That way if you are exposed to the illness later in life, your immune system kills it before it ever makes you sick. A normal vaccination schedule will give kids most of the immunizations they need between birth and 6 months of age. Although immunization usually works, sometimes the immunity wears off and "booster" shots are needed. Vaccines prevent severe diseases that can cause death or severe and permanent impairment.

Parents often have concerns about vaccine safety. I will do my best to address the most frequently asked questions.

RISKS OF VACCINES

We recognize the VERY rare risks of vaccines. The only risks that have been proven definitively are allergic reactions (allergic reactions are possible with ANY medication) and fevers (and rarely vaccines can lead to a febrile seizure). There are some other historical safety issues with vaccines, but the science has advanced in past 60 years, and allergies and fevers are the main risk now. Both of these events are very rare (severe forms 1 in 100,000 - 1 million) and easily manageable if they occur.

SIDS

Uninformed writers on the internet try to associate SIDS with vaccines. As a resident physician, I was involved in a code blue in a SIDS case. We desperately worked to resuscitate a baby who perished. That was a day I will never forget. SIDS is absolutely horrible. In SIDS, rarely can a doctor explain "the why" with confidence. SIDS is certainly a mystery, but good studies have shown zero linkage of SIDS with vaccines. The link to vaccination and SIDS is simply correlation. SIDS happens in the first year, as does immunization. *But correlation is not causation.* For instance, there is a higher homicide rate and a higher ice cream consumption rate in the summer. Should we conclude that eating ice cream makes people kill each other? Of course not.

VAERS PROGRAM

The VAERS program was started to monitor the safety of vaccines. As I mentioned, adverse reactions do rarely occur. When that happens, the incident is reported to VAERS. Here is a great article reviewing the numbers:

<http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/statements/2015/feb/03/bob-sears/what-cdc-statistics-say-about-vaccine-illnesses-in/>

COMPARED TO OTHER RISKS

It is difficult for people to judge "risk" in all matters of life. We do things that are risky every day. Consider driving or riding in a car. Our children are WAY more likely to die or be injured in a car accident than to be harmed by a vaccine, but yet, we put them in a car every day. We humans tend to overestimate the risk of scary things (sharks, tornadoes, etc.) I would note that WAY more people have severe reactions and complications (including death) from antibiotics every year, than have even mild reactions to vaccines. Yet patients who refuse vaccines will request MUCH riskier antibiotics *they don't even need.* In my career I have seen countless reactions and illnesses due to antibiotic use, yet have seen only ONE adverse reaction from a vaccine (a teenager who had headaches for a while after a meningitis vaccine).

PHARMA INDUSTRY

Conspiracy theorists try to discredit vaccines because of industry corruption. I will not defend everything the pharmaceutical industry does in many respects. I would probably rant more about this than anybody. But, I wouldn't throw the baby out with the bathwater. Even as a very conservative physician, I use medications to help people on a daily basis. Don't believe what you read on the internet: doctors get no money, kickbacks, vacations, etc. from the pharmacy industry. Some of these unethical shenanigans took place decades ago, and have been illegal now for years. And remember, vaccines *prevent* numerous illnesses. If the pharmaceutical industry was completely corrupt, they wouldn't sell immunizations at all, because they'd make way more money treating all these illnesses than they make preventing them.

MERCURY

There has been ZERO mercury in childhood vaccines for the past 20 years. Originally a non-toxic form of mercury (Thimerosal) was used as a preservative. It was removed from childhood series due to safety concerns, but no testing was ever conclusive that Thimerosal

caused problems at all. There are some multi-dose vials of adult vaccines that do contain Thimerosal, but childhood and single-dose vaccines do not.

CHEMICALS

Most chemical names sound inherently scary, but we consume thousands of them every day! Anything in the physical world has some chemical name. Ultimately, quantity and concentration is everything with respect to safety. Some things that may be "toxic" at a certain amount, are completely harmless or even good for you in a lower amount. For example, consider the scary-sounding chemical "Dihydrogen Monoxide." We'd die without this chemical. You may have heard it called H₂O, or water. However, even "harmless" water can be fatal. Drinking as little as 6 liters of over a few hour period is likely to be kill an adult! (cool video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=65&v=TvcblXvWl_k)

Why do vaccines contain aluminum or formaldehyde? It's how they work. Aluminum is an "adjuvant" that helps prompt the immune reaction, and formaldehyde is used in the manufacturing process. Aluminum is found in MANY food products and never proven to be harmful in small amounts. The amount contained in vaccines is EXTREMELY small compared to just the food person will eat over a year. Good review of this at: <http://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-ingredients/aluminum>

Formaldehyde in small amounts, is not only not a poison, but it is actually produced naturally in the body! Studies have shown that for an average-weight newborn, the amount of formaldehyde in their body is 50-70 times higher than the upper amount that they could receive from a single dose of a vaccine or from vaccines administered over time. Formaldehyde is also found in many organic food items such as meat and fruit. Good article on this here: <http://www.acsh.org/news/2015/11/23/apple-pie-mashed-potatoes-and-natural-formaldehyde>

HEALTHY CHILDREN

There are no studies showing vaccines increase risks of any particular long-term issue (growth, development, learning, etc.) or any specific diseases. There was for a time, a concern that vaccines could cause autism. This scare was the result of falsified research by a criminal physician looking to get rich off of lawyers that sue pharmaceutical companies, Since he falsified his research, over 9,000 children have died from preventable illnesses due to not being immunized. Numerous studies have since demonstrated zero link between vaccinations and autism.

COMBINATION VACCINES

The standard US series of vaccines has been extensively studied. Infants' immune systems are bombarded with "new" things around the clock. A half hour playing on the floor or in the sandbox exposes a child to hundreds if not thousands of antigens of viruses, bacteria, and fungi. One combination vaccine has only a few antigens in it.

IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO VACCINATE YOUR CHILDREN

Of course immunization is a parental decision. I encourage you to make an informed and intelligent decision in the best interest of your children's health. There are too many parents out there who have lost a child, and now must live with the regret of not giving their kids the shots that could have prevented a fatal illness. If you choose not to immunize your children, I remain happy to give them the best care possible at Holton Direct Care. However, if your child falls ill, I cannot allow he or she to have a "walk-in" appointment, as I care for numerous newborns who have yet to be immunized. If your child would have a severe vaccine-preventable illness (such as whooping cough, measles, etc) and an unimmunized newborn in my office were exposed, your child could transmit a life-threatening infection. For that reason, if your unimmunized child needs medical care due to illness, we will arrange to see them at a scheduled time, when we can control potential exposure, isolation, and decontaminate the premises before other patients could potentially be exposed.

Please do not hesitate to discuss vaccination with me at your child's next well-child appointment. For further reading on childhood vaccine safety, please visit healthychildren.org

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Vaccine-Studies-Examine-the-Evidence.aspx>

Sincerely,



Vance Lassey, MD