

Quick Answers to Tough Questions
TAPI Vaccine Talking Points
TAPI | Immunization Action Alliance | California Immunization Coalition

Common Question – Is it important to get my child vaccinated if everyone else vaccinated their kids?

- Yes! This concept is called **community immunity**, or herd immunity. And it's an important reason for you and your family to get vaccinated — so you can help keep yourselves and your community healthy.
- Germs can travel quickly through a community and make a lot of people sick. If enough people get sick, it can lead to an outbreak. But when enough people are vaccinated against a certain disease, the germs can't travel as easily from person to person — and the entire community is less likely to get the disease.
- Community immunity protects everyone. But it's especially important because some people can't get vaccinated for certain diseases — people with weakened immune systems, that have allergies to certain vaccines, the frail and infants that are too young to receive vaccines.

Reference

www.vaccines.gov/basics/work/protection/index.html

Common Question - Why not space out vaccines using an alternative schedule?

- There is no evidence that spreading out the childhood immunization schedule decreases the risk of adverse reactions.
- Delaying vaccines increases the time children will be susceptible to serious diseases.
- Requiring many extra appointments for vaccinations increases the stress for the child and may lead to a fear of medical procedures.

References

Too Many Vaccines? What you should know (Vaccine Education Center, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia –VEC)
www.chop.edu/export/download/pdfs/articles/vaccine-education-center/too-many-vaccines.pdf

Multiple Vaccines and the Immune System (CDC) www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccines/multiplevaccines.html

The Problem with Dr. Bob's Alternative Vaccine Schedule by Paul Offit, MD and Charlotte Moser
www.immunize.org/concerns/offit_moser2009.pdf

Common Question – Is it true that most people who get a disease have been vaccinated against it?

- No vaccine can be guaranteed as 100% effective. If you are vaccinated though, and do get the disease, you may get a milder case which is less severe.
- Most childhood vaccines are very effective when properly administered and all doses are received according to the recommended schedule. (~80–100%, depending on the vaccine).

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References

Top 20 Questions about Vaccination (History of Vaccines) www.historyofvaccines.org/content/articles/top-20-questions-about-vaccination

Vaccines Are Effective (HHS) www.vaccines.gov/basics/effectiveness

Common Question - Don't drug companies make big profits from pushing vaccines?

- Costs for research, development, and compliance with standards with vaccines are high. There is also no guarantee that a developed vaccine will ever be licensed.
- Vaccines are not actually highly profitable which is why only a few companies produce almost all of the U.S. childhood vaccines today, when there used to be 25 companies producing vaccines.
- Vaccine manufacturing is a public service to our community and our world.

References

The Vaccine Enterprise (Health Affairs, May 2005, Supplement) <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/24/3.toc>

Cont.

Big Pharma Vaccine Profits The Real Conspiracy (The Skeptical Raptor's Blog)

www.skepticalraptor.com/skepticalraptorblog.php/big-pharma-supports-antivaccine-movement-conspirac-vaccines-maybe-not

Drug versus vaccine investment: a modelled comparison of economic incentives

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3846654

Herd Immunity or Community Immunity Talking Points:

- Some people cannot get vaccinated because of their age or certain medical conditions.
- If too many people in a community are NOT vaccinated, babies, children with severe medical conditions and people who cannot get vaccinated will be more likely to be exposed to the disease.
- Vaccines can protect your child, your family and your community.
- Vaccines are part of a social contract that parents will send their children to school healthy and well so that all of the children are protected from disease, especially those that very fragile.
- The loss of community (or herd) immunity is shown right now in many countries in Europe - France, Italy, Greece, Romania and the Ukraine and others have large measles outbreaks due to a decline in measles vaccination with more than 41,000 people **infected** in the first six months of 2018, leading to **37 deaths**. This is the highest number of measles cases in Europe in a decade.

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Vaccine Safety Talking Points

- Children are exposed to hundreds of viruses and bacteria during normal activities like eating and playing. Getting vaccines is no extra burden on the immune system—even for babies.
- Millions of children and adults are vaccinated every year—safely.
- Experts including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Academy of Medicine, and the World Health Organization support vaccination.
- Thousands of people take part in clinical trials to test a vaccine before it is licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). VAERS and other monitoring programs help ensure vaccines are safe.
- Today’s vaccines are more refined, so even though kids receive more vaccines, they receive far fewer antigens overall (compared to their parents or grandparents).

Vaccine Ingredients Talking Points

Aluminum

- Aluminum is present in our environment; the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat all contain aluminum.
- The quantity of aluminum in vaccines is small. For example, in the first six months of life, babies receive about 4 milligrams* of aluminum if they get all of the recommended vaccines. However, during this same period they will ingest about 10 milligrams of aluminum if they are breastfed, 40 milligrams if they are fed regular infant formula, and up to 120 milligrams if they are fed soy-based infant formula.
- **Aluminum is used in vaccines as an *adjuvant*.** Adjuvants enhance the immune response by allowing for lesser quantities of active ingredients and, in some cases, fewer doses.

Formaldehyde

- Because formaldehyde is associated with the preservation of dead bodies, its presence in vaccines seems inappropriate. However, it is important to realize that formaldehyde is also a by-product of protein and DNA synthesis, so it is commonly found in the bloodstream. The quantity of formaldehyde found in blood is 10 times greater than that found in any vaccine.

Preservative/Thimerosal

- Mercury is a naturally occurring element found in the earth’s crust, air, soil and water, we are all exposed to it.
- Breastfed infants ingest 15 times more mercury in breast milk than is contained in the flu vaccine.
- Preservatives prevent contamination with bacteria.
- By the late 1990s, the AAP and the Public Health Service requested that mercury be removed from vaccines to make “safe vaccines safer” though no evidence existed to suggest that thimerosal was causing harm, but they wanted to be cautious.

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Reference –

Vaccine Ingredients: What you should know flyer, The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Volume 3 Summer 2016

Influenza/Flu Common Questions

- **Can I get the flu from the flu vaccine?** You can not get the flu from the vaccine. It is made up of only little pieces of the virus. Your achy feeling after the vaccine is your body’s immune response building to fight the virus next time it is exposed to the flu.
- **Why do some people still get the flu after they have had the flu shot?** The flu shot is not 100% effective. Regardless, some protection is better than none. Use the example of a seatbelt or a bullet proof vest – both are worth using even if they are not 100% effective.

Influenza/Flu Talking Points

- Encourage others to carefully evaluate the sources and references they are using.
- It can take up to two weeks for the flu vaccine to protect you, so getting vaccinated prior to an active flu season offers you the best protection.
- After you are vaccinated – other ways to help prevent the flu are to cover your cough, wash your hands with soap and water often and stay home when sick.
- While some people do not get very sick with the flu, it can be fatal for vulnerable populations such as those with autoimmune disease, cancer, elderly and children.

Resources for Vaccine Information

WhyImmunize.org

ADHS.gov

AzAAP.org (AZ Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics)

Immunization Action Coalition

CDC.gov

Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)

Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) – www.autismcenter.org/vaccines-and-autism