VACCINES

Do you have questions? We have answers.

Can you have a reaction to a vaccine? Are vaccines safe?

- The most common side effects are swelling or tenderness at the injection site. Serious reactions are very rare, happening in 1-2 people out of a million shots given.
- Thousands of people take part in clinical trials to test a vaccine before it is licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- After it's licensed, the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) helps track any health effect that happens hours, days, weeks, or even months later.

What additives are in vaccines, and should I be worried?

- Vaccine additives are used to make vaccines more stable and effective. All vaccines and additives go through rigorous testing before being released for use. There is no evidence that vaccine ingredients are harmful. Vaccine ingredients are used in tiny amounts for very specific purposes.

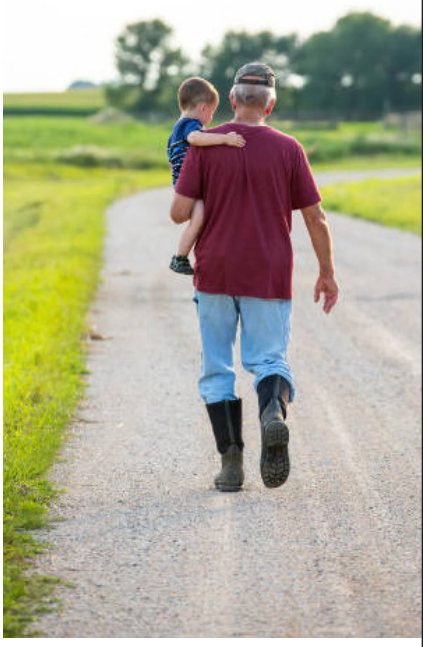
Common Additives

Aluminum in vaccines is used as an "adjuvant" to trigger the body's immune response to a disease. Aluminum is common in food and drinks including fruit and vegetables —even breast milk and infant formula.

Formaldehyde prevents microbial contamination. It's used in tiny amounts in some vaccines. It's also in the environment and is a natural byproduct of the body's metabolism.

Thimerosal is a mercury-containing preservative that prevents contamination and growth of potentially harmful bacteria. Thimerosal was removed from all child vaccines in 2001 (except multi-dose flu shot vials) as a way to reduce mercury exposure to children from all sources.

We haven't seen some of these diseases for years. Do we really need to vaccinate against all these things?



- Vaccine-preventable diseases still exist—though many of us haven't seen them in person. This is the success of our country's immunization program.
- Unvaccinated people are at risk for common illnesses (like influenza, whooping cough, and chicken pox) as well as less common diseases (like meningitis and measles).
- Dangerous diseases are just a plane ride away. International travelers not up-to-date on their shots can easily carry a disease and infect other people.

Why do we need to get certain vaccines at certain times or certain ages?

- Young children and babies are the most likely to get very sick from certain diseases. That's why shots are given to babies and why most pediatricians use the standard schedule.
- Healthy babies' immune systems easily handle weakened or killed vaccine antigens. Truly, vaccines are only a small drop in the bucket compared to the germs children face every day.
- Today's vaccines are more refined than in the past. So even though kids get more vaccines, they get far fewer antigens all together.

Are there holistic medicines or methods that can help prevent these diseases?

- Many holistic medicines have helpful effects, but they do not provide immunity to diseases prevented by vaccines.

Most vaccines are over **99%** effective in **preventing illness**

- Before vaccines, millions of children became ill with whooping cough, measles, mumps and other diseases. Most vaccines are over 99% effective in preventing illness.
- Some people believe getting a disease is the "natural" way to trigger the body's immune response. Vaccines work the same way—they trigger an immune response—but not the disease. Vaccine immunity is natural immunity.

INDIANA IMMUNIZATION COALITION

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