

Vaccination myths debunked

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Vaccination has become one of the more controversial topics in the scientific and global community in recent years. Opinions about vaccination are everywhere - the television, the internet, the media, and government officials.

The problem is that some of these opinions contain severe scientific misconceptions about vaccination and its effects on this community. This article is meant to myth bust and clear up misconceptions about vaccination so that we can all make educated decisions about our health. Some common myths about vaccines: 1. Vaccines cause Autism. - The myth that vaccines cause autism is one of the more prominent anti vaccine claims, and has proven to be the most harmful. In 1998, Dr.

Andrew Wakefield published a study that linked the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine to autism (Specter 97). After being published, the study was found to have ethics violations and to be scientifically inaccurate (Hall). The study has not been successfully replicated (Hall). 2. I don't need to be vaccinated against diseases that are extinct, like polio and diphtheria. - Vaccines are the only reason that some communicable diseases stay extinct.

The rates of diseases in the pre-vaccination era were extremely high - before the polio vaccine was patented in 1955, twenty thousand cases of paralytic polio were reported in the United States each year (CDC). Vaccine exemptors are more likely to get communicable disease such as measles and pertussis (Feikin et al 3145). Many of the communicable diseases of the past are making a comeback in the modern age because of exempting from

vaccination. For example, in 2006 there was a mumps outbreak among college students (Specter 95). 3. The flu shot causes the flu.

- Another falsehood. The flu shot contains a dead virus that protects the body from catching the live virus, so it cannot infect you (Specter 81). 4. Vaccines are dangerous because they contain thimerisol and mercury. - Extensive research has been conducted on the effect of thimerisol in vaccines and no link between thimerisol and autism has been found (CDPH).

Thimerisol was outlawed in vaccines in 2001, and the rates of autism continue to rise (CDPH). The best tool for making decisions about your health is doing the research on your own from credible and scientific sources. When you do that, you are well equipped to make educated decisions about your health and the health of your friends and family. Specter, Michael. *Denialism: How Irrational Thinking Hinders Scientific Progress, Harms The Planet, and Threatens Our Lives*. New York: Penguin Press, 2009.

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