

To immunize or not



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Immunization programs have prevented millions of deaths and illnesses which has led to the United States Centers for Disease Control naming immunization as the ??? number one medical achievement of the twentieth century??? (Halperin, Pless, 154). Initially rejected by most Western doctors as a dangerous and barbarous practice, vaccinations started to gain support at the turn of the nineteenth century when English physician Edward Jenner created a new smallpox vaccine made from the relatively mild cowpox virus. During the twentieth century, scientific innovations led to the development of improved vaccines for several infectious diseases. Eventually, as a result of widespread immunizations, previously devastating illnesses such as diphtheria, whooping cough, and tetanus became rare.

Smallpox was declared eradicated as a naturally occurring illness (Halperin, Pless, 154), and polio is expected to be abolished globally in the twenty-first century (polioeradication.org). Most health experts also believe that the eradication of measles is possible. So if vaccinations can keep our children from developing diseases that could lead to their death, why are so many parents choosing to not vaccinate their children? The internet is the first and I believe the most powerful reason many parents are choosing to not vaccinate their children. Unfortunately, this is probably the most unreliable source that a parent should base their reasoning on. Anyone and everyone can put information on the internet.

And as a parent, as soon as you read about something negative that could happen to your child from immunizations, you start to have doubts. For example, as I started my research for this topic the first thing I typed into Google was ??? Safety of Immunizations???. Well there were plenty of

websites saying how immunizations protect against deadly diseases, but there were also plenty of websites claiming immunizations were poison and why would you poison your child How does a parent know what to believe The internet goes hand in hand with the next reason parents don't immunize their children. The increased belief of holistic and natural medicine has many people rejecting immunizations. If you browse the internet for alternatives to immunizations you will find a numerous websites containing information on holistic approaches to boost your child's immune system without the use of immunizations. One particular website called Healthy Child provides a detailed list of the do's and don'ts of strengthening your child's immune system.

It uses words like toxicity and dangers to describe current vaccines. Everyone is entitled to an opinion, and that is what most of the web is...opinions. Many parents are fearful of their children getting the Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) vaccination because of recent studies about the correlation between this vaccination and autism. Studies done by the U.S Institute of Medicine, a group in Denmark and a group in Montreal have all concluded that there is no relationship between autism and the MMR vaccine. There is still no hard evidence for the increase in autism in children, however one explanation could be that a broader definition for autism is now used which includes many more children with behavioural problems that would have not been diagnosed in years past. There are other independent studies which pop up now and then claiming immunizations cause other ailments such as asthma or a lower IQ in children. But there is no supporting evidence for these claims. Another reason children don't get immunized

is that simply the parents forget. The immunization schedule in Canada is quite rigorous.

By the time a child is six they will have had over forty doses of vaccine. An article in the Winnipeg Free Press discusses this issue with Dr. Tim Hilderman, who is a provincial medical officer of health. He discusses ways this problem could be alleviated:??? The provincial government is working on a new strategy, including more reminder letters to parents, to encourage people to vaccinate their kids against about thirteen pathogens by the time they reach Grade four.

The province is also considering sending letters reminding parents with kids age fifteen that final booster shots are due at sixteen.??? With such a shortage of doctors in our province many parents don??™t get to take their children for a yearly check up with a regular family doctor. Without this constant connection with medical personnel it is quite possible that it is just an innocent case of forgetfulness. ??? Why do I need to immunize my child against the mumps or polio or whopping cough etc.. That disease isn??™t around anymore.??? Most parents who neglect to vaccinate their children for this reason are relying on what is known as the “ herd immunity effect??? (Brisson, Edmunds, 76) to protect their children from infectious diseases controlled by immunizations.

That means that they consider their child safe because everyone else's child is immunized. In fact, this can be a dangerous practice because these conditions have started to make a comeback due to people not vaccinating appropriately. We are seeing a recurrence of things like polio, mumps,

pertussis (whooping cough) and meningitis (the type that children can be vaccinated against, there are several types). A case earlier in 2010 saw nineteen children in BC's West Kootenay contract whooping cough. Dr. Monica Naus, of the BC Centre for Disease Control, said what frustrates health officials is that whooping cough is largely preventable by immunization, but all of the confirmed cases so far have involved children who were not immunized (cbc). Religious beliefs can be the factor in declining immunizations. Some religious groups such as Christian Scientists and certain fundamentalists have genuine religious objections to medicine, meaning vaccinations are out of the question.

This usually leads to a large group of people who are in regular contact with each other all being susceptible to many deadly diseases. In 1991, a religious group in Philadelphia that chose not to immunize its children touched off an outbreak of measles that claimed at least eight lives and sickened more than seven hundred people, mostly children (msnbc). The amount of needles your little one receives in their first year of life can be overwhelming for many parents. You see your baby scream and fight a nurse or doctor five times in the first year and half of their life can be trying. For this reason, many choose to space the vaccinations out over a longer period of time. Yes, it's easier on the child (and the parent) but it still putting your child at risk of contracting one of the diseases the immunizations protect against.

Vaccinations are not mandatory in Canada, however many people do not know this. That bit of information is usually left out of the conversation when the doctor is discussing the schedule your baby has to

follow for immunizations. As your child gets closer to school age doctors and other health practitioners again remind parents of keeping up on immunizations.

Ontario, Manitoba and New Brunswick have special legislations governing vaccinations of school children. This legislation allows parents to opt out of vaccine schedules. A form is signed and is put in the student's file stating he or she is exempt from any vaccinations. All other provinces in Canada do not have any sort of legislation.

This usually leads to public health nurses coming into schools and using scare tactics on students and doctors doing the same to parents, threatening that their children will not be allowed to go to school if they are not vaccinated. Yes, immunizations are good for your child, but threatening is not the way to go about it. It appears that both sides utilize scare tactics to convince you to join their side of the immunization debate. It is the responsibility of parents to educate themselves when it comes to the decision of immunizations. There are many pros and cons about each side of the argument.

However you have to look at the scientific history as well. Centuries ago people died everyday from diseases such as measles and whooping cough, there was nothing that could be done about it. Disease and death was just a way of life, a way God controlled populations. In today's medically advanced society, people die of those diseases ONLY if they haven't been vaccinated against them.

Bibliography Brisson, M , MSc, BSc and W. J Edmunds Phd, MSc, BSc. ???

Health Economics, Economic Evaluation of Vaccination Programs: The Impact of Herd-Immunity.??? Medical Decision Making.

Jan-Feb. 2003: 76-82.??? Economic benefits of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative estimated at US\$40-50 billion.

??? Polio Global Eradication Initiative. 22 Nov. 2010. 2 Dec. 2010.

[http://www. polioeradication. org/tabid/167/iid/82/Default.](http://www.polioeradication.org/tabid/167/iid/82/Default.aspx)

aspx/ Halperin. Scott. A and Robert Press.

??? Immunization in Canada: a success to build on.??? J Can Chiropractic

Association. 2003: 153-160. Neustaedter, Randall. ??? What are the

Alternatives to Vaccinations??? n. d. 1 Dec. 2010.

[http://www. healthychild. com/vaccine-choices/what-are-the-alternatives-to-vaccination/.](http://www.healthychild.com/vaccine-choices/what-are-the-alternatives-to-vaccination/)??? Parents claim religion to avoid vaccines for kids.

??? Msnbc. com. 17 Oct.

2007. 2 Dec. 2010. <http://www.>

[msnbc. msn. com/id/21347434/ns/health-kids_and_parenting/.](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21347434/ns/health-kids_and_parenting/) Skerritt,

Jen.??? Fewer children getting vaccinated.

??? Winnipeg Free Press. 28 April. 2008, A5 ??? Whooping cough outbreak hits B. C.

s West Kootenay.??? CBCNews. 4 Feb. 2010. 2 Dec.

<https://assignbuster.com/to-immunize-or-not/>

2010. <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/british-columbia/story/2010/02/04/bc-whooping-cough-west-kootenay.html#ixzz17OjaPnIA>.