



WellNews



Written by Francisco J. Barajas, M.D.

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Vaccinations, myth or fact

Vaccine history goes back to the late 1700's with Edward Jenner and the smallpox vaccine. Since then, we have had significant progress with the development of multiple vaccines. Currently, the WHO (World Health Organization) has a list of 26 vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccines have greatly reduced infectious diseases that once regularly harmed or killed many infants, children, and adults. However, the germs that cause vaccine-preventable disease still exist and can be spread to people who are not protected by vaccines. It is estimated that vaccination prevents 2.5 million deaths each year. Vaccines given to infants and young children over the past two decades will prevent 322 million illnesses, 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths over the course of their lifetimes.

Today, we are facing a big stepdown in the prevention of infectious disease due to the anti-vaccine movement. Health providers need to focus on making available to the population the evidence based data that support the benefits from vaccinations and reassure people about their safety.

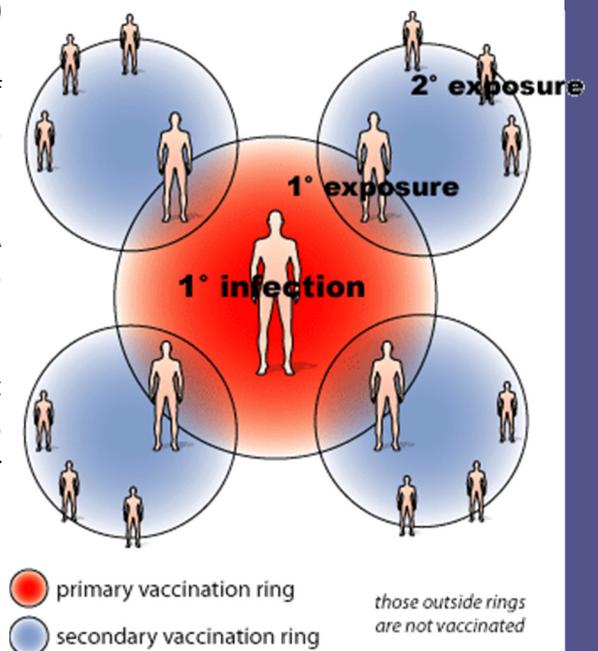
As a practicing physician, I have identified three frequent areas of misinformation about vaccines. One involving children vaccinations and the link to autism, the second pertaining to the association of the flu vaccine and developing the flu, and a third is associated to vaccine safety.

Myth: Vaccines and autism

Some people have had concerns that autism might be linked to the vaccines children receive, but studies have shown that there is no link between receiving vaccines and developing autism. The false link of MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccine with autism was started in 1998 with a fraudulent publication in the medical journal, *The Lancet*. The article has been fully detracted since 2010 after finding significant conflicts of interest, manipulated evidence and unethical conduct from the author. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recently published a document listing multiple studies that have clearly shown no link between vaccines and autism.

With regards to maternal immunization there is a new 2017 *JAMA Pediatrics* article showing that maternal influenza immunization also has no impact on autism.

Currently, 18 states allow nonmedical exemptions for those who object to immunizations because of personal, moral or other beliefs. In Texas more than 45,000 children have received nonmedical exemption for their school vaccines.





Myth: Flu vaccine and getting the flu

No, a flu shot cannot cause flu illness. Injected Flu vaccines are currently made in two ways: The vaccine is made either with flu vaccine viruses that have been 'inactivated' and are therefore not infectious, or with no flu vaccine viruses at all (which is the case for recombinant influenza vaccine). The most common reaction to the flu shot in adults has been soreness, redness or swelling at the spot where the shot was given. Other reactions following the flu shot are usually mild and can include a low grade fever and aches, that usually last 1-2 days.

Patients that receive the flu vaccine can develop flu symptoms, the reasons include: illness from other respiratory viruses (common cold), exposure to influenza viruses shortly before getting vaccinated, exposure to a flu virus that is very different from the viruses of the seasonal vaccine.

Myth: Vaccines are not safe

Vaccines are very safe. They go through years of testing before being licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Once in the market the CDC and FDA continue to monitor vaccines for safety.

Vaccine side effects are usually mild and go away in a few days. The most common side effects include soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given. Severe side effects are very rare.

Vaccines are one of the safest ways to protect your health. However, if you are pregnant or have a weakened immune system talk with your doctor before being vaccinated, as some vaccines may not be recommended for you.

Vaccinations have a schedule based on age group and risk factors. Adults need to keep their vaccinations up to date because immunity from childhood vaccines can wear off over time.

At the end of the day we have to remember that prevention of disease must be planned and executed ahead of time, when illness is absent.





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Healthy Corner Recipe
Jennifer Meachum

Ingredients:

- 1 medium apple
- 1 tbsp. peanut butter or almond butter
- Optional toppings: dried cranberries, raisins, granola, Dark chocolate chips, coconut flakes, chopped peanuts

Directions:

1. Slice the apple in thin rounds. Use a small round cookie cutter or Sharp knife to cut a hole in the center of the apple.
2. Spread a thin layer of peanut butter on one side of an apple ring.
3. Place your favorite toppings on the peanut butter.



Footnotes:

Nutrition Information:

(not including optional toppings): Calories 169, Fat 9 gm; Total Carbs 22 gm, Fiber 4 gm, Sodium 58 mg; Protein 4 gm

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