Facts about Vaccines (Immunizations)

What are some beliefs about vaccines that are not correct?

1. “The vaccine-preventable diseases have been eliminated from the United States, so my child doesn’t need to be vaccinated.”
   - Vaccines have greatly decreased the number of cases of all of these diseases. Small pox and much of polio have been wiped out.
   - Without routine vaccines, these diseases can quickly return. There are still reports of many of these diseases, including pertussis, mumps, hepatitis B, and chicken pox.
   - Vaccines protect not only the child who receives it, but also helps to prevent the disease from spreading to others.

2. “Vaccines cause harmful side effects, even death.”
   - Most vaccine side effects are minor and brief, such as a soreness or fever.
   - The diseases that vaccines prevent are more likely to cause harm than the vaccine.
   - The risk of a serious pneumonia with measles is 1 in 20, encephalitis (an infection of the brain) is 1 in 2000 and death is 1 in 3000. The risk of encephalitis with mumps is 1 in 300. However, the risk of encephalitis or a severe allergic reaction from the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is 1 in a million.
   - The risk of death from diphtheria is 1 in 20, from tetanus 3 in 100 and from pertussis 1 in 20. But there have been no deaths from the DPT or DPaT vaccines.

3. “Vaccines cause autism.”
   - A CDC study in 2013 looked at the number of antigens (the proteins in vaccines that produce antibodies against disease) that a child received during the first 2 years of life. There was no difference in the number of antigens in vaccines for children with autism and children without autism.
   - Thimerosal (a mercury-based preservative) was removed from most vaccines (except some flu vaccines) by 2001. Studies since then have proved that there is no link between thimerosal and autism.

What do I need to know to help my child?

- Talk with your child’s primary care provider and neurologist about vaccines.
- Use trusted resources for information about vaccines.

What are some trusted resources about vaccines?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/)

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