

Your Friendly Pediatrician's Autism and Vaccines Fact Sheet

1. Jenny McCarthy is an ex-Playboy Playmate. She is not a medical doctor. Despite claims to the contrary, you cannot receive an MD through Google. Dr. Bob Sears Jr is a quack who takes advantage of parents' fears to sell books and assorted supplements for a huge profit. None of his recommendations or treatments are scientifically sound or evidence-based, and none are endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
2. There have been many, many, many studies showing absolutely NO association between vaccination and autism. Some of these are printed on the attached sheet.
3. Thimerosal is a preservative that contains ethyl mercury. It allows vaccine manufacturers to produce vials that can immunize hundreds of children at a time in third world countries. It is NOT in the vaccines given to infants in the United States. It was removed in 2002—and yet there has been no drop in our autism rates. Regardless, ethyl mercury does not cross the blood-brain barrier and does not cause autism. Methyl mercury is in fish and the environment and can cause mercury poisoning which also looks nothing like autism.
4. The MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine is given at 12 months and at 4 years of age. It also has never been shown to be associated with autism. It has never contained thimerosal. Signs of autism tend to develop at between 12 and 18 months of age which leads some parents to believe that the shot caused the symptoms of autism. The leading proponent of this theory is Dr. Andrew Wakefield of the UK. His study was recently completely expunged from the scientific record due to ethics violations, contaminated labwork, and blatant falsifying of evidence. He was tried and lost his license in the UK for medical malpractice as a result of this repugnant behavior. His flawed study and questionable ethics have led to hundreds of children being hospitalized and at least five deaths due to Measles infection. (If you would like to see Dr. Krista get heated, ask about slimy Dr. Wakefield!)
5. The consequences of having a vaccine-preventable disease can be severe (death, mental retardation, severe scarring, etc) and these consequences are much more likely than developing autism. To see pictures and video of children with these diseases, you can visit www.vaccineinformation.org/photos/. I especially recommend the Pertussis video series.
6. The risk of not vaccinating your child is not just that your child might get the disease, but also that your child might give another person the disease. Adults and children who are immunocompromised due to cancer treatments or genetic disorders are particularly at risk. Pregnant mothers exposed to Rubella frequently have babies who have mental retardation and autism. Infants under the age of 12 months have never had the MMR, and so frequently develop measles when exposed to the disease and often require hospitalization. This is also true of newborns exposed to Pertussis (aka whooping cough.) In 2010, 10 babies under 3 months of age died in California after contracting pertussis from unimmunized older children and adults.
7. Despite the excellent vaccination rate in the U.S., all of the diseases we vaccinate against are just a plane ride away. There have been outbreaks of measles in the Midwest, San Diego, and Texas. There was also a large outbreak of polio in Africa as one of the dictators there has refused to allow aid workers to vaccinate as he believes vaccination causes HIV infection. (It doesn't.)
8. The current "epidemic" of autism is largely due to a broadening of definition criteria as well as increased awareness. While the number of children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder has risen, the number of children diagnosed with mental retardation has plummeted. Also, most of the increase is in the "high-functioning" end of the spectrum—which include people like Bill Gates, Dan Akroyd, and Einstein. Please see the attached sheet for a list of epidemiologic autism studies.
9. Some parents worry that giving too many shots at once can cause autism or hurt the child's immune system. In fact, the exact opposite is true. Children who receive more vaccines on the same day have a larger immune response (i.e. their immune system protects them better) against the diseases they are being vaccinated against. That being said, if a parent would like to space out the shot schedule, we can do that. We require, however, that you stick to the schedule we agree upon. Warning! Your child will likely hate coming here and may even start crying when you pull into the parking lot because of the increased frequency of immunizations when you alter the shot schedule.
10. **If you still choose not to vaccinate your child, you can no longer be seen at this office.** We cannot risk your child coming into the office with a vaccine-preventable illness and infecting the other patients who are as yet too young to vaccinate.
11. If you have any other questions, please ask us!