

BALANCED DISCUSSION ABOUT IMMUNIZATIONS

Vaccines are available as a prevention measure against 18 dangerous or deadly diseases listed below. They work by helping to develop protection by introducing your body to an infection so the body can recognize the invader and fight the disease in the future. Several vaccines such as MMR and DTP, have gained much publicity for their association with serious adverse reactions.

List of Regularly Recommended Vaccines¹

DTaP Diphtheria, Tetanus, and acellular Pertussis	PCV13 and PPSV23 Pneumococcal
Hepatitis A	Polio Poliomyelitis
Hepatitis B	Rabies
Hib <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b	Rotavirus
HPV Human Papillomavirus	Td Adult Tetanus and Diphtheria
Influenza Live or Inactivated	Tdap Combined Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis
MMR Measles, Mumps and Rubella	Varicella Chickenpox
MMRV Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella	Yellow Fever
Meningococcal	Zoster Live or Recombinant Shingles

Ask the Right Questions²

Just like starting a new medication, vaccines also carry the risk of an adverse reaction or side effect. Barbara Loe Fisher, Co-Founder and President of National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC), encourages families to be well-informed about the risks and complications before making a vaccination decision.

1. Am I or my child sick right now?
2. Have I or my child had a bad reaction to a vaccination before?
3. Do I or my child have a personal or family history of vaccine reactions, neurological disorders, severe allergies or immune system problems?
4. Do I know the disease and vaccine risks for myself or my child?
5. Do I have full information about the vaccine's side effects?
6. Do I know how to identify and report a vaccine reaction?
7. Do I know I need to keep a written record, including the vaccine manufacturer's name and lot number, for all vaccinations?
8. Do I know I have the right to make an informed choice?

If you answered yes to questions 1 through 3, or no to questions 4 through 8 and do not understand the meaning, it is encouraged that you explore more information about whether vaccinating is appropriate for you or your child at that time.

Recognizing Vaccine Reaction Symptoms^{1,2}

Any adverse event may be reported even if it is uncertain that the vaccine caused it. However, if you or your child experiences any symptoms that cause a change in physical, mental or emotional behavior in the hours, days or weeks following vaccination, it should be reported to your doctor and the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) via <https://vaers.hhs.gov/index.html>.

Examples of mild to severe reactions are:

Mild Reactions*

- Injection site reaction (redness, soreness, swelling and tenderness)
- Low grade fever (<100.4F)
- Fussiness, tiredness, or headache

Moderate Reactions

- Seizure (jerking or staring) often associated with fever
- Temporary pain and stiffness in the joints
- Fever (>103F)
- Body rash

Severe Reactions

- Deafness
- Long-term seizures, coma, or lowered consciousness
- Brain damage

**Mild reactions usually begin soon after the shot and typically last 1 to 3 days depending on the vaccination given.*

Checklist of Items to Complete the VAERS Form

- Patient Information (age, date of birth, sex)
- Vaccine Information (brand name, dosage)
- Date, time, and location administered
- Date and time when adverse event(s) started
- Symptoms and outcome of adverse event(s)
- Medical tests and laboratory results (if applicable)
- Physician's contact information (if applicable)

Compensation for Vaccine Related Injuries

The National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986 acknowledged that vaccine injuries and deaths are real. With the help of NVIC, the law allowed injured parties to bring a lawsuit in the court system if federal compensation is denied or is not sufficient. By 2018, the U.S. Court of Claims had awarded nearly \$4 billion dollars to victims.² For more information about the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) and additional vaccine injury compensation resources, refer to <https://www.nvic.org/injury-compensation.aspx>.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccines & Immunizations: Possible Side-effects from Vaccines. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/side-effects.htm>. Accessed April 04, 2019.
2. National Vaccine Information Center. If You Vaccinate, Ask 8! What You Need to Know Before & After Vaccination. <https://www.nvic.org/Ask-Eight-Questions.aspx>. Accessed April 04, 2019.