

# Pediatrics Plus

## Immunizations

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Until the middle of the 20th Century, smallpox was one of the most devastating diseases the world has ever known. Millions died from it every year. In 1967, the World Health Organization declared war on smallpox with an intensive, worldwide vaccination campaign. Twelve years later, smallpox was wiped out - gone from the Earth forever.



**Smallpox Disease**

None of us wants to see our children get sick. If we could, we would protect them from any illness, no matter how trivial - even the sniffles.

If you could protect your child from some of the most deadly diseases in history and at the same time you could also help protect your neighbors' children and other children around the country from the same diseases and, if you could, actually help to rid the world of some of these same diseases that have been crippling and killing children for centuries, why would you hesitate to do so? This is exactly what vaccines are helping us to do.

Up through the early 1920's, diphtheria was one of the most dreaded childhood diseases in the United States, killing over 10,000 people every year. We started vaccinating children against diphtheria in the 1930's and 40's, and the disease started disappearing. Today it is rare for a doctor even to see a case of diphtheria, much less have a child die from it.

In 1962, the year before the measles vaccine was introduced, almost 500,000 cases of measles were reported in the U.S. Ten years after we started vaccinating against measles there were about 32,000 cases, and ten years later there were fewer than 2,000. In 1998 and 1999, only about 100 measles cases were reported each year.

Parents in the 1950's were terrified as polio paralyzed children by the thousands. Then we learned how to prevent polio using vaccines. Now the fight against polio is nearly won.



### **1950's Hospital iron-lung ward for polio victims**

The vaccine program in the United States has been highly successful. In the opinion of some, vaccines have been the greatest advancement in the history of pediatric medicine. In fact, the U.S. vaccine program has been so successful that it has become a victim of its own success. Some parents are no longer afraid of the diseases that terrified parents 50 years ago. Instead, they are afraid of the very vaccines that brought about these miracles.

In 1920, there were 86,000 cases of diphtheria reported in the U.S. In 2003, there was only 1 case reported. In 1925, there were 147,000 cases of whooping cough reported. In 2003, there were 11,000 cases. In 1958, 125,000 cases of measles were reported. In 2003, only 56 cases were reported. Similar findings are available for tetanus, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, and Hib diseases. In all cases, there has been a drastic decline in vaccine preventable diseases following the routine use of vaccines against the diseases. The scientific literature abounds with the success stories of these "miracles." What is conspicuously lacking from the scientific literature is proof that vaccines are a detriment to society.

This is not to say that vaccines are 100% safe. Severe complications do happen, but they are extremely rare. When they occur, the outcome can be tragic. However, when you consider the success

stories of vaccines and compare these to the rare complications that can be scientifically attributable to vaccines, the evidence is overwhelming that vaccines have been, are, and will continue to be one of the great advances of modern medicine.

There is no scientific evidence that any of the following leads to autism: vaccines, combination vaccines, administering multiple vaccines at the same office visit, and administering thimerosal-containing vaccines. In fact, since 2001, with the exception of some influenza (flu) vaccines, thimerosal (a mercury-containing preservative) is no longer used as a preservative in routinely recommended childhood vaccines.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) all recommend the routine administration of childhood vaccines. Pediatrics Plus concurs with these recommendations. The practitioners at Pediatrics Plus, along with the overwhelming majority of practitioners in the United States, believe that if enough children in this country fail to be adequately immunized, there will be a resurgence of potentially fatal vaccine-preventable diseases. This is not where we want to go.

Despite the overwhelming scientific evidence that vaccines are safe and effective, some parents will continue to decline them for their children. Pediatrics Plus believes that this is a very dangerous approach to vaccine-preventable diseases. As a part of our desire and efforts to protect our patients and those around them, we have decided to no longer allow families who refuse to vaccinate their children to be a part of our family here at Pediatrics Plus. We apologize for any inconveniences that this policy may cause you.