

Making a Decision About Vaccination

Your child's long-term health may be affected by decisions you take now about vaccination. There are diverse views on the value of immunisation in preventing illness. The safety and effectiveness of vaccines is not as clear-cut as it may seem from Government guidelines. Making an informed choice about vaccination requires that you:

- Understand the risks of the diseases and weigh them against the risks associated with the vaccines.
- Consider if the vaccine is effective enough to warrant the adverse reactions you or your child may suffer. Remember that the effectiveness of vaccines vary.
- Consider the role that vaccination has had in controlling disease, compared with cleaner drinking water, better sewage and good nutrition.
- Avoid being bullied into a decision either for or against. When you have decided - write down why you made your decisions.

Positive ways to support your child's healthy immune system

Whether or not you decide to vaccinate your child, there are many ways to help them stay healthy:

- Breast-feed your child for as long as possible. Breast-feeding provides unsurpassed natural nutrition to your infant. Mother's milk carries protective intestinal antibodies which shield the new-born from gut infection. The health of the mother's gut immunity is transferred through her breast milk, so try your best to avoid antibiotics during pregnancy, birth and during breast-feeding. Your baby is only protected (by your antibodies) against the diseases you had naturally, not the ones you have been vaccinated against.
- It is unnecessary to vaccinate your baby (while you are still breast-feeding) for any disease you had naturally. Breast milk contains long-chain sugars necessary to develop a healthy immune system. The mother's antibodies last for 3 months beyond the time she finishes breast-feeding.
- Feed your children whole-food, preferably organic, which is rich in vitamins (especially C, A and E) and minerals (especially potassium, zinc and selenium). Also avoid processed food (because processing frequently destroys vitamins) and refined carbohydrates: sugar reduces white blood cell count for up to 4 hours after it is eaten. Pure clean unfluoridated water should be all a baby needs to drink other than milk.
- Manage small babies' exposure to bugs and try to avoid known infections and overwhelming exposure (e.g. nursery settings) too early.
- Give love and attention - the best nutrition for the immune system: "A hug a day keeps bugs away".
- Play outside together. Plenty of fresh air, sunshine and exercise can boost your child's immune system. A child who enjoys life and laughs, has a healthier immune function.

Breathe the fresh clean air deeply!

- Sleep and rest are also essential. The body renews and regenerates during sleep. Stress hormones are processed during rest.
- Massage can stimulate the immune system. Baby massage is fun to learn and do.
- Avoid antibiotics and Calpol®/Nurofen® unless absolutely necessary (see separate pages on Calpol® and Nurofen®). These drugs suppress the body's natural response to a fever, which is necessary for the immune system to fight infection. Dr Paul Offit says in his book "Breaking the Antibiotic Habit" that the over-prescription of antibiotics is contributing to the development of resistance in minor ailments such as coughs, colds, ear infections and sore throats. This in turn leads to increased levels of illness and the development of more vaccines.
- Consider using an energy therapy such as cranial osteopathy or homeopathy to boost your child's immune system, which will support their healthy reaction when they do get an illness.
- Use homeopathic nosodes to protect your children from diseases which are epidemic. They are simple to take and enable the immune system to operate as nature intended without toxicity or unpleasant side-effects. See pages on Homeopathic Prophylaxis and Nosodes. Further information on nosodes can be found in the *No Nonsense Travel Vaccine Handbook*.

Any of the positive measures outlined above will help support your child's well-being. You could also:

- See a professional homeopath for constitutional treatment before and after vaccination, and at least 2 or 3 times a year. The change of seasons (e.g. at start of Spring and Autumn) are good times for a "Health M.O.T."
- Supplement your child's diet with multi-vitamins and minerals. As many children are fussy eaters, encourage fruit and veg and avoid too much dairy or meat.
- Provide plenty of fresh unfluoridated water to drink. Avoid fizzy drinks (even low-calorie drinks - because the body still thinks it's sugar and insulin is produced), sweets, and anything containing lots of "E" numbers, as they can make children hyperactive.
- Homeopathic remedies can help to clear toxic side-effects of vaccines. See your homeopath for specific remedies before and after vaccination.

References:

- <http://www.vaccineriskawareness.com>
- *Comparing Natural Immunity with Vaccination* – Trevor Gunn (Informed Parent Pubs, 2005)
- *Is Fear of Fever Hurting Our Children?* – Edda West (*The Informed Parent* issue 3, 2002)
- *Breaking the Antibiotic Habit: A Parent's Guide to Coughs, Colds, Ear Infections and Sore Throats* – Dr Paul Offit (reviewed by Cassandra Marks in *The Informed Parent* issue 4, 2004)
- *Health the Only Immunity* – Ian Sinclair (3rd edition, 2002)
- *Vaccine Prevention & Treatment of Infectious Contagious Disease with Homeopathy* – Kate Birch (Trafford publishers, 2007)
- *Viruses* – Dr Patrick Quanten (*The Informed Parent*, November 2004)
- http://www.naturalrearing.com/J_In_Learning/Immunization/immunesystem (12/10/06)
- <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/10/081026101713.htm> ("How Breast-Feeding Transfers Immunity To Babies", October 2008)