

# Mission In Motion

Health & Wellness Monthly Newsletter

August 2013—Immunizations



## Do Immunizations Really Work?

Despite the absence of diseases like polio, diphtheria, and tetanus in entire communities, some parents remain unconvinced about the importance of immunizations. Yes, it's true that a few children do not respond to one vaccine or another—no vaccine has a record of 100% effectiveness. But depending on the study being cited, childhood vaccines are 85% to 98% effective. That's a remarkable track record, particularly when you take into account the serious nature of many of these infections.

When you have an opportunity to give your child up to a 98% chance of avoiding a disease like chickenpox that can lead to dehydration or pneumonia or a serious illness like whooping cough that can cause seizures, brain disease, and death, that's a convincing reason to vaccinate.

Nevertheless, despite the easy availability and the proven effectiveness of vaccines, some children are still not properly immunized. A few parents are unaware that the initial shots need to be given in the early days and weeks of infancy. Other parents have made a conscious decision to avoid having their child vaccinated, believing one myth or another about the safety of immunizations.

But when children are not immunized, the results can be devastating. Each year, thousands of children in the United States become seriously ill with diseases that could have been prevented with proper immunizations. Immunizations are among the most effective medical interventions of all time. Short of basic sanitation and nutrition, no medical intervention has done more to save lives and prevent disease than immunizations. Immunizations are the cornerstone of preventive health, and the American Academy of Pediatrics believes strongly that every child needs and deserves the protection that immunizations provide.

Source: *Immunization & Infectious Diseases: An Informed Parent's Guide*

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**Immunization** is the process whereby a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine. Vaccines stimulate the body's own immune system to protect the person against subsequent infection or disease.

Immunization is a proven tool for controlling and eliminating life-threatening infectious diseases and is estimated to avert between 2 and 3 million deaths each year. It is one of the most cost-effective health investments, with proven strategies that make it accessible to even the most hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations. It has clearly defined target groups; it can be delivered effectively through outreach activities; and vaccination does not require any major lifestyle change.

Source: *World Health Organization*

# What are some of the myths—and facts—about vaccination?

**Q: What are some of the myths – and facts – about vaccination?**

**A: Myth 1: Better hygiene and sanitation will make diseases disappear – vaccines are not necessary. FALSE**

**Fact 1:** The diseases we can vaccinate against will return if we stop vaccination programmes. While better hygiene, hand washing and clean water help protect people from infectious diseases, many infections can spread regardless of how clean we are. If people are not vaccinated, diseases that have become uncommon, such as polio and measles, will quickly reappear.

**Myth 2: Vaccines have several damaging and long-term side-effects that are yet unknown. Vaccination can even be fatal. FALSE**

**Fact 2:** Vaccines are very safe. Most vaccine reactions are usually minor and temporary, such as a sore arm or mild fever. Very serious health events are extremely rare and are carefully monitored and investigated. You are far more likely to be seriously injured by a vaccine-preventable disease than by a vaccine. For example, in the case of polio, the disease can cause paralysis, measles can cause encephalitis and blindness, and some vaccine-preventable diseases can even result in death. While any serious injury or death caused by vaccines is one too many, the benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh the risk, and many, many more injuries and deaths would occur without vaccines.

**Myth 3: The combined vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough) and the vaccine against poliomyelitis cause sudden infant death syndrome. FALSE**

**Fact 3:** There is no causal link between the administering of the vaccines and sudden infant death, however, these vaccines are administered at a time when babies can suffer sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). In other words, the SIDS deaths are co-incidental to vaccination and would have occurred even if no vaccinations had been given. It is important to remember that these four diseases are life-threatening and babies who are not vaccinated against them are at serious risk of death or serious disability.

**Myth 4: Vaccine-preventable diseases are almost eradicated in my country, so there is no reason to be vaccinated. FALSE**

**Fact 4:** Although vaccine preventable diseases have become uncommon in many countries, the infectious agents that cause them continue to circulate in some parts of the world. In a highly inter-connected world, these agents can cross geographical borders and infect anyone who is not protected. In western Europe, for example, measles outbreaks have occurred in unvaccinated populations in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom since 2005. So two key reasons to get vaccinated are to protect ourselves and to protect those around us. Successful vaccination programmes, like successful societies, depend on the cooperation of every individual to ensure the good of all. We should not rely on people around us to stop the spread of disease; we, too, must do what we can.

**Myth 5: Vaccine-preventable childhood illnesses are just an unfortunate fact of life. FALSE**

**Fact 5:** Vaccine preventable diseases do not have to be ‘facts of life’. Illnesses such as measles, mumps and rubella are serious and can lead to severe complications in both children and adults, including pneumonia, encephalitis, blindness, diarrhea, ear infections, congenital rubella syndrome (if a woman becomes infected with rubella in early pregnancy), and death. All these diseases and suffering can be prevented with vaccines. Failure to vaccinate against these diseases leaves children unnecessarily vulnerable.

**Myth 6: Giving a child more than one vaccine at a time can increase the risk of harmful side-effects, which can overload the child's immune system. FALSE**

**Fact 6:** Scientific evidence shows that giving several vaccines at the same time has no adverse effect on a child's immune system. Children are exposed to several hundred foreign substances that trigger an immune response every day. The simple act of eating food introduces new antigens into the body, and numerous bacteria live in the mouth and nose. A child is exposed to far more antigens from a common cold or sore throat than they are from vaccines. Key advantages of having several vaccines at once is fewer clinic visits, which saves time and money, and children are more likely to complete the recommended vaccinations on schedule. Also, when it is possible to have a combined vaccination, e.g. for measles, mumps and rubella, that means fewer injections.

**Myth 7: Influenza is just a nuisance, and the vaccine isn't very effective. FALSE**

**Fact 7:** Influenza is much more than a nuisance. It is a serious disease that kills 300,000–500,000 people worldwide every year. Pregnant women, small children, elderly people with poor health and anyone with a chronic condition, like asthma or heart disease, are at higher risk for severe infection and death. Vaccinating pregnant women has the added benefit of protecting their newborns (there is currently no vaccine for babies under six months). Vaccination offers immunity to the three most prevalent strains circulating in any given season. It is the best way to reduce your chances of severe flu and of spreading it to others. Avoiding the flu means avoiding extra medical care costs and lost income from missing days of work or school.

**Myth 8: It is better to be immunized through disease than through vaccines. FALSE**

**Fact 8:** Vaccines interact with the immune system to produce an immune response similar to that produced by the natural infection, but they do not cause the disease or put the immunized person at risk of its potential complications. In contrast, the price paid for getting immunity through natural infection might be mental retardation from Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib), birth defects from rubella, liver cancer from hepatitis B virus, or death from measles.

**Myth 9: Vaccines contain mercury which is dangerous. FALSE**

**Fact 9:** Thiomersal is an organic, mercury-containing compound added to some vaccines as a preservative. It is the most widely-used preservative for vaccines that are provided in multi-dose vials. There is no evidence to suggest that the amount of thiomersal used in vaccines poses a health risk.

**Myth 10: Vaccines cause autism. FALSE**

**Fact 10:** The 1998 study which raised concerns about a possible link between measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism was later found to be seriously flawed, and the paper has been retracted by the journal that published it. Unfortunately, its publication set off a panic that led to dropping immunization rates, and subsequent outbreaks of these diseases. There is no evidence of a link between MMR vaccine and autism or autistic disorders.

**Reading food labels** can provide important nutrition information to help you maintain a healthy diet. Here are some simple guidelines to get you started:

- Scan the top section of the label for information on serving size, calories, and nutrients
- Look at the bottom portion to get Daily Values (DVs) for 2,000- and 2,500-calorie diets and dietary information for fats, sodium and fiber
- Pay attention to the serving size and number of servings in the food package
- Remember that 40 calories are considered low, 100 calories are moderate and 400 calories or more is high

They may not be a bestseller, but when you read up on food labels, you'll be starting a new chapter on a healthier life.

Source: Food and Drug Administration  
46336.0706

[www.bcbstx.com](http://www.bcbstx.com)

## MONTHLY SMARTS

### FOOD SMARTS

If your entrée comes with a less-than healthy side dish, ask for a substitute—perhaps a salad or some fruit.

### HEALTHCARE CONSUMER SMARTS

Opt for water rather than other beverages when eating out. Not only is water good for you, but it will save you money on every meal.

### SAFETY SMARTS

Be sure everyone is wearing a seat belt on every ride. Children through age 12 should ride in the back seat in an appropriate child safety seat or booster seat. Go to [www.safecar.gov/parents/CarSeats.htm](http://www.safecar.gov/parents/CarSeats.htm) online for specific recommendations.

*Source: Positive Promotions*

## Schedule checkups and ask about immunizations

Immunizations are developed to help us stay well and to stop the spread of life-changing and life-threatening illnesses. Years ago, scientist stopped polio in its tracks. Today, immunizations keep flu and other health threats under control and save lives.

Partner with a wellness champion, your doctor or health care provider to live and work at your healthy best. Get the immunizations, screenings and checkups you need.

*Source: Personal Best*

## City of Mission Walking Club

Did you know that City of Mission has a Walking Club? You are encouraged to join us!

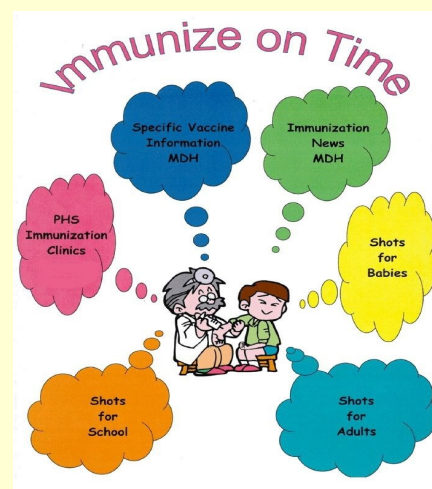
**When:** Tuesdays and Thursdays

**Where:** City Hall

**Time:** Stretches begin at 5:20 p.m. and Walking begins at 5:30 p.m.

**Distance:** 1 mile

Contact Human Resources to register for the Walking Club and receive a free t-shirt and pedometer!







## August Health and Wellness Seminar

**Topic:** Immunizations

**Date:** August 22, 2013

**Time:** To be Announced

**Speaker:** To be Announced

**Location:** To be Announced

### Tomato Soup with Chickpeas and Lemon

- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 small onion, chopped
- 1 large carrot, sliced
- 1 large rib celery, chopped
- 3/4 cup sliced leek, white and 1-inch green parts
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 (14-oz.) can no salt added whole peeled tomatoes
- 1 (15-oz.) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 tsp. smoked Spanish paprika
- 3 cups reduced-sodium vegetable broth
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 2 lemons

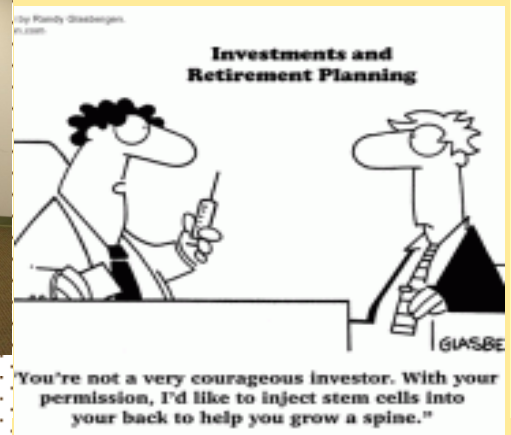
In large heavy saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook until golden, 4 minutes, stirring often. Add carrot, celery, leek, and garlic, stirring to coat them with oil. Cook until leek slices are translucent and soft, about 4 minutes.

Add tomatoes one at a time, holding them over pot and crushing them in your fist. Add liquid from can. Add chickpeas, paprika and broth. Bring liquid to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, covered, until vegetables are almost tender, 20 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To serve, divide hot soup among four bowls. Cut 1 lemon into quarters. Squeeze juice from a quarter into each bowl, straining out seeds. From center of second lemon, cut four 1/4-inch slices. Heat a dry cast-iron skillet or grill-pan over high heat. Add lemon slices and cook until caramelized to brown and lightly charred in places, 1-2 minutes. Turn and cook for 1 minute. Set 1 lemon slice in center of each bowl and serve.

**Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 1½ cups. Per serving: 200 calories, 5 g fat (< 1 g sat fat), 34 g carbohydrates, 10 g protein, 9 g fiber 461 mg sodium.**

## Cartoon Corner



## Health & Wellness Seminars

September 2013–Alcohol & Drug  
Addiction Recovery

October 2013–Cancer Awareness  
(Topics subject to change)

\*If you have a subject or topic that  
you would like more information on,  
feel free to make your request at

## Simple Swap: Serving Sizes

Get familiar with serving sizes:  
A cup of veggies or fruit is about  
the size of two scoops of ice  
cream. A 3-ounce serving of meat  
is about the size of a deck of  
cards.

## Mission In Motion

Our mission is to promote health  
awareness and to encourage  
healthy lifestyles.

Human Resources Department

1201 E. 8th Street

Mission, TX 78572

956-580-8630

Noemi Munguia—Human Resources Director

Nereyda Peña—Benefits Coordinator

Elena Perez—Personnel Manager

Vicky Ortiz—Insurance Benefits Specialist

