

Pediatric Center of Round Rock

2300 Round Rock Ave. Suite #102

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www.pcrr.yourmd.com

VACCINES: A success story...

In today's super-information era, parents face the difficult chore of sorting out available information about different medical issues that affect their children. The task becomes confusing when we come across misleading information while surfing the "web" and some web sites advise against vaccine administration. It is very important to check only reliable sources when making important decisions in medical issues, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics site at www.aap.org. Here are some facts about vaccines. Remember to always consult your doctor and check the credentials of your sources before you refuse any medical treatment.

- Vaccines are the most important success story of the 20th century. Today parents can expect that every year there will be only 2-3 cases of diphtheria in the United States, 3 cases of birth defects caused by rubella and no cases of polio. The incidence of these serious illnesses would increase dramatically if we all stop immunizing our children. We are protected when the immunization rates are high, and the risk increases in third world countries, where immunization rates are very low.
- No vaccine is completely safe. The risk of side effect exist with vaccines like with any other treatment, but the risk of suffering the consequences of the disease is greater, and outweighs the small risk we take by vaccinating. Just think about the risks we take by driving to work or school everyday, and we still do it because it provides us with a greater benefit.
- When patients become concerned about thimerosal (a mercury derivative used in vaccines vials to act a preservative against bacteria growth) the issued was fully investigated and thimerosal was removed from the vaccines, even when we don't have any evidence of harm caused by it. Most of the vaccines at your pediatrician's office no longer contain thimerosal.
- Why do we need to immunize against chickenpox? Most children recover from it without consequences, but one out of every thousand will develop severe pneumonia or infection of the brain when infected with chickenpox. About 9,000 people are hospitalized and 100 die of chickenpox every year in the United States. It also causes birth defects in children born to a woman who is infected during pregnancy.
- Rubella is another childhood disease that can cause birth defects in the unborn child if the mother suffers from the disease during the first three months of gestation. These birth defects include blindness, mental retardation and heart disease.

International travel is more common now than a few decades ago; do you know what the person sitting next to you are incubating when you travel? Don't take any chances...consult your doctor.

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FEVER: FACT AND FICTION

- Fever is the body's natural way of fighting infection. Evidence suggests that elevated temperature enhances various components of the immune system, retards the growth of bacteria and viruses and increases the production of certain protective cells by the body. Cold-blooded animals, like lizards, show an increase rate of survival if infected with a bacteria when they were allowed to seek out a heat source and raise their body temperature.
- Fever is a sign of illness, not a disease.
- In some children, fever can be associated with a seizure or dehydration, but fever will not lead to brain damage or death.
- If fever causes discomfort to your child, you may give Acetaminophen every four hours, no more than 5 doses in 24 hours, or Ibuprofen (if your child is older than 6 months) every 6 hours, no more than 4 doses in 24 hours during waking hours. Do not wake up your child to give medication.
- When giving fever medication, follow the instructions in the bottle using your child's weight to calculate the amount. Both medications come in two different formulations, for "infants" and for "children". If the child is less than 1 year of age, use the "infants" formulation. Older kids should take the "children" form. The "infants" formulation comes with a dropper to administer the medication; the "children" form provides a small measuring cup. Make sure you are using the appropriate measure device when administering the medication.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR....

Fever itself will not harm your child and does not necessarily requires treatment. But you should call the pediatrician if:

- Your child is under 3 months of age and has a rectal temperature of 100.4 F or higher.
- Your child is lethargic or irritable.
- Fever has been present for longer than 3 days.
- Your child has symptoms such as sore throat, ear pain, abdominal pain or pain when urinating.
- Your child is drinking less fluid than usual and has had fewer than four diapers in the past 24 hours or two urinations during waking hours.
- You are worried that your child is less active than normal or is having trouble breathing, whether or not he/she has a fever.