

To Vaccinate or Not to Vaccinate

The debate over whether people should receive vaccinations has been around for a long time. Public resistance to vaccinations has occurred for as long as vaccinations have been available. People who are opposed to vaccines worry that they cause health issues in individuals, especially children. Medical professionals worldwide, however, agree that vaccinations are safe, effective, and necessary.

A vaccine is a substance used to create antibodies and boost the immune system against certain diseases. The ingredients in a vaccine may contain a very small piece of a disease-causing germ, or they may contain a form of the germ that is dead or very weak. Because vaccines contain strains of a disease, some people think that they might catch the disease or become ill. However, that is not the case. The germs in vaccines do not pose a risk. The human body reacts to the vaccine by making antibodies. This is helpful because antibodies help fight diseases that are caused by germs.

Some people claim that vaccines are not safe because they contain harmful ingredients. People worry that the mercury and aluminum found in some vaccines are linked to life-threatening side effects. However, public health organizations such as the Centers for Disease control (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) stress that the ingredients in vaccines are safe. The amount of chemical additives in a vaccine is very small, and the ingredients are controlled by scientists. Vaccines contain only trace amounts of chemical additives, so they pose little or no risk to the majority of people. In

fact, on a daily basis, people are exposed to more bacteria, viruses, and toxins than what is contained in a vaccine. Parents should however be aware of the ingredients in a vaccine just in case their children have had a prior history of allergic reactions.

Ultimately, people should take the time to educate themselves about the pros and cons of vaccines. The evidence will show that the risks are minuscule and only pose a risk to a very small portion of the population. Statistics show that most vaccines are more than 90% effective in preventing diseases. Vaccines save millions of children every year from preventable diseases. When most of the population is vaccinated against contagious diseases, the entire community will be more protected. Polio and smallpox are two examples of diseases that have been eliminated through widespread vaccination. However, when people are not vaccinated, they are at risk of catching diseases that others are immune to. These people can also spread contagious diseases and put the entire community at risk.