

What's the Real Story on the Vaccine Debate? Learn More

By Rachel Swaby  October 19, 2009 | 3:00 pm | [Wired Nov 2009](#)



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AN EPIDEMIC OF FEAR

[How Panicked Parents Skipping Shots Endangers Us All](#)

[The Misinformants: Prominent Voices in the Anti-Vaccine Crusade](#)

[How to Win an Argument About Vaccines](#)

[H1N1 Flu Shot: 3 Major Fears Debunked](#)

Autism

For more information about Autism, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is a good place to start. The [CDC's Autism Spectrum Disorder](#) page is comprehensive, including information on screening and diagnosis, the latest research, and support for families. The CDC has also put together its own [list of helpful resources](#).

The National Institutes of Health's [autism information page](#) has dozens of links to the latest news, clinical trials, and journal articles. The also provide links to several autism organizations.

Three recent studies have found common genetic factors that influence the risk of autism. Here is a [summary of the results](#).

Another study looked into the incidence of gastrointestinal problems among children with autism. The researchers found [no significant association](#) between the two conditions.

Vaccines

You'll find information on [immunization schedules](#) on this CDC page.

The CDC's [Vaccine Safety page](#) includes information on how vaccines are tested and monitored, a history of vaccine safety, and current health topics related to vaccination.

Many concerns about vaccine safety have been addressed by the scientific community. Take thimerosal, a mercury-containing preservative once found in some childhood vaccines. The Food and Drug Administration has put together an [exhaustive report](#) on the preservative's history, the controversy surrounding it, and what the FDA has done to address parent concerns.

The CDC answers some frequently asked [questions about thimerosal](#) and has put together a timeline showing [when thimerosal was in vaccines](#) from 1999 to 2008. Finally, in 2004, the Institutes of Medicine

released a report [rejecting the link](#) between thimerosal-containing vaccines and autism.

Philosophical Exemption Laws

While every state has legislation that requires children to get certain vaccines, some states allow parents to opt out for philosophical or religious reasons. View a list of the [exemptions allowed by state](#). There are serious risks that come with deciding not to vaccinate. The [2005 measles outbreak in Indiana](#) is a good example. And outbreaks continue to occur, according to "[Update: Measles Outbreaks Continue in U.S.](#)" A study by Kaiser Permanente has found that [unvaccinated children](#) are 23 times more likely to become infected with pertussis. And a recent paper in *The New England Journal of Medicine* blames clusters of disease outbreaks on parents who refuse to vaccinate their children. Another paper, in *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, explains how groups of [unvaccinated people can put those vaccinated at risk](#) for disease.

Anti-Vaccine Websites

Though many of these organizations would not define themselves as such, these are the most active organizations and websites in the current battle against vaccines:

[National Vaccine Information Center](#)

[Autism One](#)

[Generation Rescue](#)

[SafeMinds](#)

[Treating Autism](#)

[National Autism Association](#)

[Autism File](#)
