



FIVE VACCINE MYTHS



National Vaccine
Information Center
Your Health. Your Family. Your Choice.
NVIC.org & NVICAdvocacy.org

5 VACCINE MYTHS

Myth 1: Most medical doctors say that vaccines do not cause injury or death, so it must be true.

Fact: Beginning with the smallpox vaccine, inflammation of the brain, permanent brain damage, and death have always been among the most severe complications of vaccination. Like all pharmaceutical products, vaccines carry a risk of harm or failure to prevent infection that can be greater for some individuals.

Myth 2: People who question vaccine safety are ignorant and do not understand the science.

Fact: Just the opposite is true. Studies reveal that mothers and fathers with college or post-graduate degrees more frequently asked questions about vaccine safety and effectiveness. In 2013, a report published by the National Academies of Sciences concluded that fewer than 40 published studies had evaluated the safety of the federally recommended vaccine schedule for children under age six.

Myth 3: People who do not vaccinate are selfish and don't care about public health.

Fact: Biodiversity affects the way individuals respond to diseases and vaccines. We are all different genetically and epigenetically, and our health is also influenced by the different environments in which we live. Some people are biologically more susceptible to harm from vaccination and, if a severe reaction does occur, that person may choose to stop vaccinating so they will not become permanently disabled and a burden on society.

Myth 4: Science trumps religious beliefs, so religious exemptions to vaccination should be eliminated.

Fact: Doctors cannot predict who will be harmed or injured prior to vaccination. It is a violation of human rights for government officials to require you to be a member of an organized religion or state-sanctioned church to exercise freedom of conscience and religion. It is a violation of your civil rights if you or your minor child are denied access to education, medical care, employment, or otherwise discriminated against based on your vaccination status.

Myth 5: It is ethical for government to sacrifice the few for the many.

Fact: The philosophy of utilitarianism, which sanctions the sacrifice of a few for the many, was discredited as a pseudo-ethic in 1947 after World War II when the ethical principle of informed consent to medical risk-taking in scientific experiments was defined as a human right. Eventually, a patient's right to exercise informed consent to medical treatment became globally recognized as central to the ethical practice of medicine. Public health laws using the utilitarian rationale to force vaccination are unethical because they violate autonomy, freedom of conscience and the informed consent ethic.

VACCINATION AND HEALTH: WEIGHING THE RISKS

Unlike prescription drugs administered to the sick, vaccines are pharmaceutical products primarily administered to healthy people. Like prescription drugs, vaccines carry two risks: first, vaccines may cause severe reactions, injuries, or death from complications; and second, vaccines may fail to prevent infection and transmission of disease. NVIC supports your human right to exercise freedom of thought, conscience, and religious belief when making a vaccine decision for yourself or a minor child.

Learn more about vaccines and diseases at [NVIC.org](https://www.nvic.org) and take action today to protect voluntary vaccine choices at [NVICAdvocacy.org](https://www.nvicadvocacy.org).