



Holistic Family Practice

Vaccines

Vaccination concerns are frequently raised by parents. As this topic is often controversial and hotly debated, this statement is intended to clarify my perspective, and provide guidance to those who would like to choose an alternative to the routine vaccination schedule.

My default practice is to follow most of the routine vaccination schedule. But I don't suggest this practice flippantly or without thought. As a parent in our culture of fear and skepticism, I am equally exposed to the concerns presented to you through various forms of media. However, considering all the reassuring response literature and overwhelming data, especially in the contextual high profile nature of this matter, including a full retraction statement from the British Medical Journal which printed the original provocative study that launched this movement of concern against certain vaccines, and eventually for some people, the practice of vaccinations at all, I am fully at peace with the administration of vaccines being given to both my patients and my own child and future children. In fact, independent research and continued surveillance from the CDC has proven beyond scientific doubt that not only is there *no proof* that vaccines are associated with autism; there is actually *proof against* this proposal.

Although I am professionally reassured about vaccinations, I can sympathize with patients' concerns as a parent. I am acutely aware that these concerns are sometimes fueled by distrust of pharmaceutical companies, the government, or the medical system as a whole, as well as a plethora of unfounded websites, not to mention well publicized legal cases where defendants adamantly attribute their presented sufferings to vaccinations.

I want to respond to two commonly raised questions or misconceptions. First, thimerosal (a form of mercury), the preservative in vaccines often blamed for the cause of complications from vaccines, has been removed from all vaccines except the annual flu vaccine. Anything that remains otherwise is what is unremoveable, and it is less than what is often found in foods we eat (especially fish) or other preservatives (it is technically undetectable). Additionally, some parents have asked to separate the

combination vaccines into individual vaccines in order to “spread out” the vaccines over time. For those who may still be concerned about thimerosal, it is worth considering the theoretical accumulation of thimerosal (and aluminum, for those concerned about this ingredient, of which I haven’t been convinced either) over this greater number of injections.

Secondly, though the illnesses targeted by the vaccines seem to be obsolete (eg measles or chicken pox), indeed, they are only “flying under the radar” as a result of the vaccines. We know that when vaccines are declined in mass numbers, the illnesses reappear in strength. It is only because of the ongoing use of these vaccines that we are able to keep these infections under control, and avoid their potentially dangerous harms and complications.

Though ultimately it is a *personal* choice whether to vaccinate or not, or when to vaccinate, it is also a *public* health matter and we are all responsible to and should be accountable to each other, especially as we are progressively becoming more globalized. It is not unjustified, for example, for parents of immunosuppressed children to feel their child is at significant risk when exposed to other unvaccinated children who could be harboring even chicken pox, which could seriously harm or hospitalize their child, or worse.

With all this being said, especially in response to parental requests seeking to distribute the vaccines over time, I have created a few different vaccine schedules to choose from. Please feel free to ask about these options.

Vaccinations can often be a source of significant conflict. Though I recommend the routine vaccination schedule, you should not feel ostracized or judged by me regardless of your decision. Communicating openly about our concerns and rationale can only help lead us to a mutually agreeable, safe, and healthy decision for your children.

Sincerely,

Mark Su, MD