

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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Immunization protects against illness

Illnesses such as measles can be prevented through immunization. To find out more, go to immunizealberta.ca.

It is important to know the facts about immunization in order to make the best decisions.

Immunization prompts our immune systems to produce disease-fighting antibodies, which is a natural function.

Immunization gives us the opportunity to build these antibodies before being exposed to disease, and without getting the actual disease.

If you and your child are exposed to a disease after being immunized, you will both be armed and able to fight it off, without getting sick. Without immunization, our bodies do not have the opportunity to build immunity to – or armour against – the disease.

Without the armour of immunization, you and your child are at risk of getting very sick.

All Albertans are advised to ensure they are up to date on their immunizations. For more information, call Health Link at 811, go to immunizealberta.ca or go to myhealth.alberta.ca.

Given the recent rise in measles cases in North America, here are some quick facts:

- Immunization is very effective at protecting children and adults against infection and is the best way to reduce the risk of disease.
- The vaccine given most often to protect your child against measles is called MMR-Var vaccine. This vaccine protects against four diseases—measles, mumps, rubella and varicella.

- The vaccine given most often to protect adults against measles is called MMR vaccine. This vaccine protects against three diseases – measles, mumps and rubella.
- Measles is an extremely contagious viral illness. It is easily spread through the air (by sneezing or coughing) and by direct contact with someone who is infected.
- Before widespread immunization, measles caused an estimated 2.6 million deaths each year worldwide.
- Today in developed nations like Canada, for every 1,000 people who get measles, one or two will die.
- There is no cure for measles.
- The risk that measles poses to you and your child's health is far greater than any risk related to being immunized.

Do vaccines cause autism?

- No, vaccines do not cause autism. Research has found no link between vaccines and autism. You may have heard about Andrew Wakefield, a British surgeon who suggested a link between autism and vaccine.
- What you may not have heard is that the research he published was found to be false, and Wakefield had his medical licence taken away because of this. In January 2010, Britain's statutory tribunal of the General Medical Council found Wakefield guilty of four counts of dishonesty and 12 counts involving the abuse of developmentally challenged children, as it pertained to his false research on autism.

Source: Immunizealberta.ca