

Vaccines have saved more lives and prevented more disabilities and illnesses than any other medical discovery.

Over 100 years ago, infectious diseases were the leading cause of death worldwide. Today, in Canada, we rarely see any of these illnesses because immunizations are readily available.

Some parents still worry about having their children immunized, often because of false information and confusing myths about vaccines.



**For more information, visit:**

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)

[www.immunize.cpha.ca](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca)

[www.paul-offit.com](http://www.paul-offit.com)

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

**What discovery  
has saved the  
most lives in the  
past 100 years?**

For more information about immunizations,  
contact York Region *Health Connection*  
to speak to a nurse in the  
Vaccine Preventable Diseases Program

1-800-361-5653, TTY 1-866-252-9933

or visit [www.york.ca/immunization](http://www.york.ca/immunization)



4869 09 2011





# Vaccine Myths And Truths

## Myth

Vaccines can cause chronic illnesses or autism.

## Truth

There is no scientific proof that shows any link between vaccines and any disability, chronic illness or autism.

## Myth

Vaccines are unnecessary because the illnesses they protect us from are not dangerous.

## Truth

Today, most Canadians have never experienced the illnesses that their children are vaccinated against – they may not know about the serious and sometimes fatal results of these diseases.

For example, before 1900, Diphtheria was one of the main causes of death of children in Canada. Parents lived in fear that their child might become infected. By 1983, fewer than five cases were reported and there were no deaths because of widespread immunization against diphtheria.

## Did you know?

*During the past century, vaccines have helped North Americans live longer by about 30 years. Vaccines have an excellent record of safety. The benefits of being immunized far outweigh any possible risks.*

## Myth

Children get too many vaccines.

## Truth

Vaccines protect children from many more diseases today than in past generations. Babies are now immunized against over 23 different diseases, compared with only four diseases in the 1940s.

- Vaccines have been highly refined over the years; the amount of active ingredient is far less than it was in the past.
- Many vaccines are combined in one formula to reduce the number of shots needed.

---

## Did you know?

*Smallpox killed about 300 million people in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1978, the disease was eliminated because of vaccine campaigns.*

---

## Myth

Vaccines are unnecessary in Canada because the diseases are not seen here anymore.

## Truth

The reason these diseases are rarely seen is because of effective vaccination programs.

Remember, when people stop being immunized, diseases reappear.

Many diseases are still common in other countries. When people travel to other parts of the world, there is the risk of bringing diseases back with them.