

Get the Picture: Childhood Immunizations

[Child Announcer] CDC-TV presents ... Get the Picture: Childhood Immunizations.

[Mom#1] Like you, I'm a parent. Like you, keeping my child safe is my number one priority. I'm in a Moms Morning Out group, and we've had all sorts of questions regarding vaccines. I decided, the next time our Moms Morning Out group met, I would invite a pediatrician who's a friend of a friend. Ladies, this is Jeanne Santoli from the CDC. She came to answer some of our tough questions about vaccines. Jeanne, thank you so much for coming.

[Dr. Jeanne Santoli] Well, thank you very much for asking me. I really enjoy talking with people about immunizations. I'm also a mom and a pediatrician, so this is a great opportunity, and I appreciate coming.

[Mom#1] Did you vaccinate your own children?

[Dr. Jeanne Santoli] I did. I have two, and they're both fully vaccinated.

[Mom#3] So, what's Anna up to nowadays?

[Mom#2] I just took her to get her 9-month-old shots. We were a couple of weeks late. And, you know...

[Mom #3] It's okay.

[Mom#2] I know, but it's so hard. Took her in. But, you know, I was watching something on TV about -- somebody was talking about how vaccines cause autism. I mean, do vaccines really cause autism?

[Dr. Jeanne Santoli] Well, you know, autism is a very serious disease. It's heart wrenching for families. And I think one problem is that we don't know very much about the causes of autism. There have been a number of studies that have looked at the link between autism and vaccines, either the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine or thimerosal -- that's a preservative that was in a number of childhood vaccines up to 2002. And in fact, those studies don't show any link between vaccines and autism.

[Mom #4] You know, I feel like, especially maybe because I have three kids, but I feel like I'm always going to the doctor to get shots. And so sometimes I just worry that we're getting too many shots. Is that really a concern? Is that a problem?

[Dr. Jeanne Santoli] You know, it's an important question, because now we have probably about twice as many vaccines to protect children as we did, say, 20 years ago. So, even though children do get vaccines against about 14 different diseases now when they're quite young, that's not more than the body can handle. A child puts a toy in their mouth or crawls on the floor, and their immune system sees those germs, recognizes them, and teaches the body how to protect itself

against them. Vaccines work in that way and they help children's bodies recognize germs that can cause very serious diseases.

[Mom #3] I have another question that's sort of related. I mean, I understand why we have to have the number of vaccines, but how about the schedule that the doctors follow? Is it really appropriate for every child?

[Dr. Jeanne Santoli] Even though there's only one childhood immunization schedule, it actually takes into account the differences between children, depending on their health or medical conditions. Sometimes parents ask about delaying the vaccines in the schedule, and I think it's really important for parents to understand that that can place their children at risk for getting these serious diseases.

[Mom #1] What happens if we stop vaccinating? Do these diseases really come back?

[Dr. Jeanne Santoli] The diseases absolutely will come back if we stop vaccinating. We've seen that over the past couple of years with outbreaks of mumps and measles. There was a story of a little girl who was from Indiana. She and her family went and traveled to another country. She wasn't vaccinated. She came back with measles to the United States. And because of her, she was in contact with more than 30 people who developed measles. Three of those people had to be hospitalized, and one even went to the intensive-care unit.

[Mom #2] I get really nervous about taking my daughter to the doctor to get shots. Is there something that I can do to comfort her while, you know, she's getting her shots?

[Dr. Jeanne Santoli] Well, I mean, it is hard to take your baby for shots. I know I feel that way when I take my little ones for shots. But you can hold them and cuddle them while they're getting the vaccine, and then you can hold them tightly afterwards. And actually what I found was that nursing the baby right afterwards often makes them feel comforted pretty quickly.

[Mom #1] Jeanne, thank you so much for coming today. You've answered so many of our questions. If you have any additional questions, ask your pediatrician.

[Dr. Calk] I've been a pediatrician now for -- in private practice -- for about 22 years and see between 25 and 40 patients per day. I spend a lot of time talking to parents about the importance of vaccines. We used to see 5, 10, 15 cases of invasive Hib disease, including meningitis, in this practice a year. And it was just so devastating to the parents, because they had really just kind of gotten to know their babies by that point and knew their personalities, and these babies would sometimes die or be maimed for life. Since the inception of that vaccine about 20 years ago, we have not seen a single case of invasive Hib disease. Moms and dads ask me every day, "Should I immunize my baby?" And I answer every time, "Absolutely, yes. It's one of the most important things you can do to protect your baby's health."

[Child Announcer] A message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[Mom #1] I'm a parent. Mama, Mama, Mama.

Like you, I'm a parent.

Whee!

Like you --

Okay.

Hmm.

What?

Here's your baby. Do you want your baby?

[Thud]

Ohh.

Keeping my child safe is my number-one priority.

...group met to invite a pedia--

...to our next Moms Morning Out group to answer some really tough questions.

[Babbling loudly]

[Laughter]

This is a child who never talks.

I'm a parent.

Mama!

Mama.

[Laughter]