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## **A LEGITIMATE QUESTION**

### **What about immunizations?**

The Western culture that gave us vaccines, can be characterized in several ways: by our technological development; by our artistic endeavors; by our ability to solve problems; by our overall sophistication; and most importantly, by our beliefs.

There is a set of beliefs that cannot be separated from society as a whole. It is so well accepted, that if it were a religion, the western hemisphere would be considered theocratic and homogenous in its thinking. These beliefs are that: vaccines are the result of a highly sophisticated people, they are totally responsible for wiping out disease, the benefits outweigh the risks, and every vaccine invented is good for everyone.

Anyone holding a different view on vaccines is considered heretical. A contested view is not well tolerated, debated or readily accepted in our culture. Vaccines are truly the "holy grail" of our westernized way of life.

How can we justify these unquestioned beliefs? Human beings can be greedy, unethical, and flawed, so when we hear how a certain "big business" has ripped us off, we jump at the chance to believe it. But when vaccines are sold to the public, we quickly accept that there could never be anything dangerous about them. And of course when it comes to vaccines, we wholeheartedly believe the public's best interest is always made more important than profit.

We easily question almost everything else, so what

about immunizations? Why do people put this particular medical procedure up on a pedestal? Absent objective, critical thinking, we have unconditionally accepted that they are safe, effective, and always valuable, just as we have accepted a natural belief, like gravity pulls down.

We believe other drugs can be recalled. We believe a drug company can be sued for failing to make certain drugs safe. So why do we believe that vaccines must be safe all the time? When *can* we ask, “what about immunizations?”

How did we come to expect recalls on dangerous products? On food? These occur on a regular basis. Yet why don't we expect or accept any problems with vaccines? Ever?

We doubt the accuracy, the perfection, of every other human industry. Why not vaccines? To take it further, we accept statistics like “medical errors may cause up to 100,000 deaths each year in this country.”<sup>1</sup> Yet we somehow cannot wrap our minds around the fact that there could be mistakes in vaccination.

The author finds it highly illogical that vaccines are so fervently accepted without question. Vaccines hold a kind of “immunity” to scrutiny in spite of the fact that many other new discoveries or ideas in religion, politics, and general medicine are more well accepted and honestly debated. In situations when it seems reasonable to ask if a vaccine was a proximate cause of damage or death, the question, “what about immunizations?” has been muted on many occasions.

The controversy on this subject never gets a fair exploration. A vast amount of information, that is easily and readily obtainable, supports the idea of vaccinating 100%. But a growing, yet still suppressed body of opposing information, is just as valuable.

Inquiring people who think vaccine “facts” go contrary to their original doubt about vaccines, will find this book helpful. People are faced with a mountain of media in

many forms that sell vaccines as if there has never been any controversy. This book offers a contrast to that every-day information.

Not to be labeled as anti-medicine or anti-government, this book is simply another way to look at that bit of science thought to be the holy grail of medicine. Leaving no room for popular conventional wisdom, it is written from the standpoint that enough evidence exists to doubt the entire philosophy behind the justification of vaccinating.

Magazines, television shows with featured physician appearances, incentive programs and Kid Fairs, extol the virtues of vaccines, while enticing people to believe that all vaccines are wonderful and important.

The majority of children's doctors and health departments "inform" parents with partial facts or none, and usually add fear and pressure if too many questions are asked. In addition, co-workers, sisters, mothers, grannies, in-laws, back-fence neighbors and life-long friends chatter in our ears about how it is a duty to see that their child is "protected" from "preventable" diseases. When parents resist these persuasions, and act on their own careful research, they are considered "political," "boat-rocking," "rebellious," or "neglectful."

Some physicians have considered this book dangerous, as it presents a viewpoint distinctly opposing the status quo. If the danger is that people will become aware of an important controversy, then the purpose of this book has been served.

It is imperative that people examine both sides of the vaccine issue before they make an extremely important decision. Though this book does not offer medical advice, it is a helpful examination of the facts and the psychological and emotional aspects of vaccine decision making. In the case of childhood vaccines, parents realize there are no easy answers. Parents are motivated to find confirmation of their common

sense beliefs, purely driven with the desire to do what's best for their children.

*What About Immunizations? Exposing the Vaccine Philosophy* can help decode the language of the vaccine philosophers. Exposing the "vaccine philosophy" puts the available choices into perspective so an informed decision can be made. Information in this book gives the reader confidence to stand up to any pro-vaccine argument, no matter how sophisticated.

Almost as important as making an informed decision is being comfortable with the results of that decision. Because ultimately, when all is said and done, the decision-maker and possibly a child, must live with it for the rest of their lives.

When statistics can be interpreted and reinterpreted and studies are done by the same fox watching the hen house, and when there is never a political or monetary incentive to ever abandon the practice of vaccination, we are left alone to choose what makes sense.

People need to make their own decisions regarding whether to vaccinate or not. And in the search for answers, "what about immunizations?" is a legitimate question.

1. Pamela F. Gallin, MD, and Joseph K. Vetter, "Gambling With Your Life" *Readers Digest*, August 2006; [www.rd.com/living-healthy/medical-mistakes/article28079-1.html](http://www.rd.com/living-healthy/medical-mistakes/article28079-1.html) (accessed May 4, 2008).