



What Stands Between Your Family and a Deadly Disease? Safe and Effective Immunizations

September 19, 2016 By Christine Kukka

Are you dreading taking your kids for their back-to-school vaccinations or wondering if vaccines do more harm than good? Let me tell you about my neighborhood.

Three years ago, a neighbor's children came down with whooping cough (pertussis). It turns out, the parents didn't believe in vaccinating their kids. All three children were infected as was their elderly grandmother and two other children down the street.

This family's refusal to get vaccinated against this highly-infectious respiratory disease threatened the health of the neighborhood. Two doors away, a family had a new baby and the infant's brother played with the infected children. Babies can't be vaccinated against pertussis until they're six months old.

Half of all babies who contract pertussis are hospitalized because they can't clear the heavy mucus from their lungs. Of those hospitalized, [23 percent get pneumonia and 1 percent die](#). Before the pertussis vaccine became available, about [9,000 children](#) died from the infection every year. Luckily, the baby wasn't infected in this micro-epidemic.

Here's another example why vaccines are worth the discomfort of a shot. My daughter, born in China, didn't have access to immunizations, including the birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine. As a result, she is chronically infected with hepatitis B. Had she been born in a country that immunizes children, she wouldn't face the 15 to 25 percent risk of dying from liver disease that she faces today.

Immunizations are safe and effective, and they protect our families and our communities, which is why every child should be immunized before they start school this fall. So why doesn't everyone protect their children?

To answer this question and read the rest of this article, [click here](#).

This article originally appeared in the Hepatitis B Foundation's [Hep B Blog](#); permission to reprint granted.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/article/stands-family-deadly-disease-safe-effective-immunizations>