



How we know there's no link between vaccines and autism: Suggested talking points

- **Any connection between vaccines and autism has been repeatedly debunked.**
 - The mistaken belief that vaccines cause autism in children was popularized by [a 1998 study that was later retracted](#) due to fraudulent data.
 - Since then, decades of credible studies have consistently shown that vaccines [are not associated with autism](#).
 - Researchers attribute rising autism rates to increased screening and changes to diagnostic criteria, which allow for better access to appropriate interventions and support services.
 - Vaccines are rigorously tested before they're approved and have been shown to be safe across age groups.
- **There is no single cause for autism, and most risk factors exist before birth.**
 - Research shows that genetics and birth complications [likely contribute](#) to autism, which is [typically diagnosed](#) in children older than 3 (although adult diagnoses are [increasingly common](#)).
 - Vaccines [do not alter genes](#), and receiving recommended vaccines during pregnancy is safe for pregnant people and their babies.
 - In fact, vaccination during pregnancy can [help reduce the risk of complications](#) that dangerous diseases cause, and it passes protective antibodies to the developing fetus.
- **Unvaccinated children are at risk of catching preventable diseases that can make them very sick and cause long-term complications, including death.**
 - Vaccines also help prevent children from spreading dangerous illnesses to vulnerable family members, including newborns, older adults, and immunocompromised loved ones.
 - The benefits of vaccination outweigh any potential risks, and severe side effects [are extremely rare](#). Most children will only experience mild pain and, possibly, some swelling at the injection site.
 - Learn when children should receive recommended vaccines and how many doses they'll need [from the CDC](#).
 - Children can get vaccines—including an updated COVID-19 vaccine and this season's flu vaccine—at their pediatrician's office and at pharmacies. Find pharmacies near you at [Vaccines.gov](#).



How we know there's no link between vaccines and autism: Frequently asked questions

1. What is autism, and what causes it?

Autism is a behavioral difference that affects how people communicate and socialize.

There is no single cause for autism. Research shows that genetics and birth complications [likely contribute](#) to autism, which is [typically diagnosed](#) in children who are 3 years old or older (although adult diagnoses are [increasingly common](#)).

2. Are vaccines safe for children?

Yes. Vaccines are rigorously tested before they are approved, and severe side effects [are extremely rare](#). We know this because the U.S. has a system that monitors vaccine safety. Anyone can submit reports to this database and then experts figure out whether something is a confirmed side effect. After hundreds of millions of doses, we know severe side effects don't happen often. Most children will only feel mild pain, and, possibly, some swelling at the injection site.

Despite false claims from public figures and others that vaccines cause autism in children, decades of credible studies [have consistently debunked this myth](#).

3. Why do children need routine vaccines?

Routine vaccines help protect children from catching preventable diseases that can make them very sick and cause long-term complications, including death. They also help prevent children from spreading dangerous illnesses to vulnerable family members, including newborns, older adults, and immunocompromised loved ones.

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