



# TDH STATEMENT AND RESOURCES ON IMMUNIZATIONS

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**In 2018, a total of 15 measles outbreaks and 2,002 cases of mumps have been reported in the United States.**<sup>1,2</sup> In 2017, 126 children died from influenza.<sup>3</sup> The vast majority of those who have become ill in these outbreaks were not vaccinated.

Twenty years ago, the medical journal *The Lancet* published a paper authored by a now-discredited physician. That publication suggested that children had developed autism as a result of receiving the measles, mumps and rubella or MMR vaccine. The author's findings were called into question when other researchers could not replicate his results or confirm his claims, and it was later discovered that his work was funded by lawyers who were seeking evidence against vaccine companies. Authorities ruled the doctor who authored that study acted dishonestly and irresponsibly and revoked his license, prohibiting him from practicing medicine.

Unfounded claims that vaccines cause autism resulted in concern for some parents, leading some to delay or refuse vaccines for their children. Numerous studies have been done to test these claims. **More than 1,000,000 children have been studied since *The Lancet* publication in 1998, and more than 25 peer-reviewed studies have been published, all refuting any connection between vaccines and autism.**<sup>3</sup>

The science has clearly shown the following:

- Vaccines do not cause autism.
- Vaccines save lives by preventing disease.
- Failure to vaccinate has resulted in resurgence of vaccine-preventable illnesses and deaths.
- Vaccines are not 100 percent effective, but greatly reduce the chance of getting certain infections that may cause serious illness or death.
- Research into the relationship between vaccines and autism has been exhaustive and has concluded there is no relationship between the two.

[Autism Speaks](#), a national autism advocacy organization, released the following statement in 2015:

*"Each family has a unique experience with an autism diagnosis, and for some it corresponds with the timing of their child's vaccinations. At the same time, scientists have conducted extensive research over the last two decades to determine whether there is any link between childhood vaccinations and autism. **The result of this research is clear: Vaccines do not cause autism.**"<sup>4</sup>*

The World Health Organization stated in its 2016 commentary:

*"It is hard to imagine a more effective method than vaccination for keeping children healthy. Not only do vaccines save lives in huge numbers, they are also cost-effective, relatively easy to deliver and, in most cases, provide lifelong protection."<sup>5</sup>*

Major medical societies have published statements attesting to the safety and effectiveness of vaccinations:

*"Vaccines are safe. Vaccines are effective. Vaccines save lives. Claims that vaccines are linked to autism, or are unsafe when administered according to the recommended schedule, have been disproven by a robust body of medical literature. Delaying vaccines only leaves a child at risk of disease. Vaccines keep communities healthy, and protect some of the most vulnerable in our society, including the elderly, and children who are too young to be vaccinated or have compromised immune systems."<sup>6</sup>*

American Academy of Pediatrics, an organization of more than 68,000 pediatricians committed to the optimal physical, mental and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults

*"Vaccines work with the immune system to prevent infectious diseases like polio, measles, diphtheria and whooping cough. As such, vaccines are one of the greatest success stories in all of medicine...**Neither vaccines nor their preservatives increase the rate of autism compared to unvaccinated children. Vaccines do not change the timing of autism symptoms, nor is there any effect on autism severity.**"<sup>7</sup>*

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, an organization whose mission is, in part, to promote the healthy development of children, adolescents, and families through research, training, prevention, comprehensive diagnosis and treatment

*"The AMA fully supports the overwhelming body of evidence and rigorous scientific process used by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices which demonstrate vaccines are among the most effective and safest interventions to both prevent individual illness and protect the health of the public"<sup>8</sup>*

American Medical Association, an organization representing 90 percent of physicians in the United States through its House of Delegates

*"Vaccines are safe, effective and they save lives. The fake news of an alleged link between vaccines and autism has been thoroughly debunked...Evidence-based science is key to understanding the necessity and effectiveness of vaccines. Science has proven time and time again that vaccines are a safe and effective tool in preventing communicable disease across the lifespan."<sup>9</sup>*

American Academy of Family Physicians, an organization representing more than 131,000 physicians and medical students nationwide

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cases of vaccine-preventable diseases such as smallpox, polio, diphtheria and rubella have been reduced by almost 99 percent as the result of routine vaccination. Misinformation about vaccine safety has led to an increasing number of parents who choose not to vaccinate their children and as a result, some of these dangerous and potentially deadly diseases are coming back.

**Data show the current U.S. vaccine supply is the safest in history.**<sup>10</sup> Vaccination is one of the best ways to put an end to the serious effects of many diseases. Vaccination according to evidence-based best practices protects everyone, especially those who have weakened or failing immune systems or who are too young to be vaccinated.

For a list of credible studies by topic, including studies about **general safety and number of vaccines; studies looking at the measles, mumps and rubella or MMR vaccine; court decisions; studies looking at thimerosal and investigative reporting**, visit <https://healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Vaccine-Studies-Examine-the-Evidence.aspx>.

For a list of credible resources for vaccine information, visit <http://immunize.org/catg.d/p2070.pdf>. To read reports about people who have suffered or died as a result of vaccine-preventable illnesses, visit <http://immunize.org/reports/general.asp>.

## References

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