You protect your child from the dangers you can see. What about the ones you can’t?

Misconceptions and facts about childhood immunizations

My child doesn’t need them

- It’s just like: fireproofing or extra insurance for prevention.
- Vaccines prevent highly infectious and serious life-threatening diseases.
- Outbreaks happen when vaccine coverage levels fall too low.
- These diseases still occur in Canada and around the world.
- Tetanus is found in dust and soil and will never go away.
- Every year, tens of thousands still die from measles around the world, most are children under the age of 5.

The risks are greater than the benefits

- The benefit is large – saves lives and prevents serious illness.
- Vaccines are the most monitored and studied topic in medicine.
- Common side-effects are pain, redness, swelling, fever—acetaminophen helps.
- Serious adverse events are rare (anaphylaxis, about 1–2 per million doses, GBS rates unknown but rare).
- Everything in life has risks, including vaccines which are low risk.

Too many shots at once is harmful

- The practice is safe.
- More protection sooner, builds stronger immune system.
- Children tolerate multiple shots well, S/Es don’t increase.
- Children can handle 100s of vaccines at once.
- Less clinic visits for families.

Thimerosal in vaccines makes them unsafe

- Thimerosal is not in the vaccines your child will get (exception some flu types).
- Experts have never considered thimerosal amounts in vaccines to be unsafe.
- MMR vaccine has never had thimerosal.
- Thimerosal has not been linked to autism.
- Ethylmercury is excreted much faster than methylmercury a toxic concern.

Vaccines cause autism

- Autism rates have continued to increase despite the removal of thimerosal from vaccines.
- Hundreds of thousands of children have been studied—no link to autism has been found.
- Just because events happen close together doesn’t mean they are related.
- Experts continue to explore the causes of autism.

Aluminum in vaccines makes them unsafe

- Low amounts of aluminum have been safely used in vaccines for over 80 years.
- It’s necessary to achieve a good immune response.
- Aluminum can be found everywhere including breast milk and formula.
- It’s excreted quickly.

Formaldehyde in vaccines makes them unsafe

- It’s used as a safety measure in vaccine production and is later removed, trace amounts may remain, too small to cause harm.
- It’s been safely used for a long time.
- A baby will naturally have about 10x the amount found in a vaccine in their system at any one time.

Helpful Websites

- ImmunizeBC
  www.immunizebc.ca
- Immunize Canada
  www.immunize.ca
- US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
  www.cdc.gov/vaccines/

Acknowledging your client’s concerns

1. Acknowledge
2. Clarify to understand your client’s needs

Steering your conversation

1. Refute the myth(s)
2. Continue your conversation
Note: This is the point where you skillfully close your conversation if client is a conscientious objector

Knowledge – know the facts well!

1. Provide further knowledge, tailored to your client’s needs
2. To close, reinforce discussion with a benefit statement
3. Provide further reading materials
4. Provide your recommendation

The A-S-K Approach helps to bring attitude, skill and knowledge together as one in the pursuit of communication excellence.
**A**

**Acknowledge your client’s concerns**

1. **Acknowledge**
   - “I hear what you’re saying. That’s a common question I get.”
   - “That’s a good question — I’m glad you asked it.”
   - “That’s a scary story — I can see how you would be worried.”
   - “Sounds like you want to do the right thing for your child — these are common questions clients ask.”
   - “It’s great that you’ve done some research — it’s good to ask questions.”
   - “I sense that you’re worried about immunizations.”

2. **Clarify to understand client’s concerns**
   - “Tell me more about what you’ve heard.”
   - “If I understand you correctly, what you’re asking is...”
   - “Tell me more about what you know.”
   - “So your concern is that...”
   - “I’m hearing you say that...”

**S**

**Steer your conversation**

1. **Refute the myth(s)**
   - “There is no scientific evidence to support that...”
   - “Actually, that’s a common myth...”
   - “Unfortunately the internet can have inaccurate information depending on where you look.”
   - “When something like that happens it’s natural to look for a reason.”

2. **Continue your conversation**
   - “It appears our viewpoints will continue to be different. I recommend vaccines — but ultimately it’s your choice.”
   - “I sense we’re going in circles. Is there anything else I can do for you right now? I know you have your child’s best interests at heart. If you ever want to discuss this further, please call me.”
   - “If you decide later to get your child immunized, it’s never too late to immunize.”

**K**

**Knowledge – know the facts well!**

1. **Provide further knowledge tailored to your client’s needs [see Immunization Communication Tool]**
   - Nurse ↔ client knowledge transfer [give-listen-clarify as needed]

2. **To close, reinforce discussion with a benefit statement**
   - “Vaccines are a healthy choice.”
   - “Vaccines are the best way to protect your child from serious diseases.”
   - “Immunizations have saved many lives.”
   - “Vaccines are safe and effective.”
   - “Multiple shots at each visit are the best way to protect your child.”

3. **Always ask your client if they would like further reading materials**
   - “Can I send you more information by email?”

4. **Provide your recommendation and book an appointment or ask what they plan to do**
   - “Is your child’s next immunization appointment booked? Let’s book your child’s next appointment now.”
   - “For best protection babies should be immunized as early as possible starting at 2 months. Let’s book your child’s first visit now.”
   - “I recommend all childhood vaccines, on time. Is your child’s first visit booked? Let’s book it now.”
   - “I strongly recommend all immunizations.”
   - “Get all of their shots, get them on time.”