

**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**

- Its 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.
- More children still die of measles around the world than are born in Canada each year.

**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 (T) in vaccines makes them unsafe**

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

MISCONCEPTIONS AND FACTS CONTINUED

**Vaccines cause autism**

- Autism rates have continued to increase despite the removal of T 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**

- Safe low amounts are used, 70 year safety record.
- 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**

- [www.immunizebc.ca](http://www.immunizebc.ca)
- Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion [www.immunize.cpha.ca](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca)
- US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/)



**The A-S-K Approach  
for effective immunization  
communication**



**Acknowledge your client's concerns**

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



**Steer 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.**

## The A-S-K Approach Desk Reference

# 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

(Note: This is the point where you skillfully close your conversation if client is a conscientious objector)

##### Closing ideas:

- “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.”