

Frequently Asked Questions: Evaluating Internet Information

With so many internet sites on childhood immunization or vaccines, how do I know which one is reliable?

The Internet has made vast amounts of immunization resources available to the parents. Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the information being presented is credible or not. In order to make an informed decision on the accuracy of immunization information obtained from the Internet, ask yourself the following questions:

Who is providing this information?

The source of the information (i.e., organization or individual) should be made clear, and more information about the source should be available. Be cautious of information attributed to unnamed sources.

Is the information based on sound medical research?

Scientific studies published in medical journals are reviewed by qualified professionals and are therefore credible sources. Information should contain references from and to peer-reviewed publications.

Is the information up to date?

Reliable sites show when they were last updated. Make sure the pages have been updated recently, and that the research cited is new.

Does the information make sense?

If you find information that is too good (or bad) to be true, it probably is.

A lot of people get the flu each season, it's not that serious, right?

You should be able to follow up on the information through posted contact information. Additional reading lists should contain information from sources not directly linked to the site's owner.

Don't assume that flawed information will be easy to detect. Always evaluate the credibility of material taken from the Internet. Remember, your child's pediatrician is your best resource for immunization information – ask him/her to answer any questions you might have about information gathered from the Internet.

Where can I find reliable web sites and books on this topic?

[Immunizations and Infectious Diseases: An Informed Parent's Guide](#) by Margaret Fisher, MD. This evidence-based guide for parents explains what infections are, how they progress, and how to prevent them.

[Vaccinating Your Child: Questions and Answers for the Concerned Parent](#) by S.G. Humiston, MD, MPH, and Cynthia Good. This book addresses the medical, ethical, and legal issues related to immunization to help parents make informed decisions about individual vaccines.

[Vaccines and Your Child](#). Paul Offit, MD, and Charlotte Moser (2011). A book for parents who want to know detailed information about the science and safety of modern vaccines.

[Do Vaccines Cause That?](#) By M. Myers, MD, and Diego Pineda. This guide will help you sort through all the misinformation that makes it hard to decide what's best for your child's health.

[Parents Guide to Childhood Immunization](#). A 94-page booklet from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that introduces parents to 12 childhood diseases and the vaccines that can protect children from them.

[Vaccinations: What Parents Need to Know](#) by the American Council of Science and Health (ACSH). This report summarizes the evidence on both the benefits and the potential risks of vaccines, with an emphasis on the vaccines used in routine childhood immunization.

Health Professional Associations

Academic Pediatric Association
www.ambpeds.org

American Academy of Family Physicians
www.familydoctor.org

American Academy of Pediatrics
<http://www.aap.org/immunization/>

American College Health Association
www.acha.org

American Medical Association
www.ama-assn.org

American Nurses Association
www.nursingworld.org

Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine
www.atpm.org

Infectious Diseases Society of America
www.idsociety.org

National Association of School Nurses
www.nasn.org

National Medical Association
www.nmanet.org

Non-Profit Groups and Universities

Albert B. Sabin Vaccine Institute
www.sabin.org

All Kids Count
www.allkidscount.org

Allied Vaccine Group
www.vaccine.org

Program for Appropriate Technology (PATH) Children's Vaccine Program
<http://www.path.org/vaccineresources/>

Every Child By Two
www.vaccinateyourbaby.org

Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
www.vaccinealliance.org

Immunization Action Coalition
www.immunize.org

Institute for Vaccine Safety Johns Hopkins University
www.vaccinesafety.edu

Institute of Medicine
www.iom.edu

National Alliance for Hispanic Health
www.hispanichealth.org

National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
www.nfid.org

National Network for Immunization Information
www.immunizationinfo.org

Vaccine Education Center at CHOP
www.vaccine.chop.edu

Government Organizations

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
www.astho.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>

Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov

National Association of City and County Health Officials
www.naccho.org

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
www.niaid.nih.gov

National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program
<http://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation/>

National Vaccine Program Office
www.hhs.gov/nvpo/

Pan American Health Organization
www.paho.org

Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System
<http://vaers.hhs.gov/index>

World Health Organization
www.who.int

