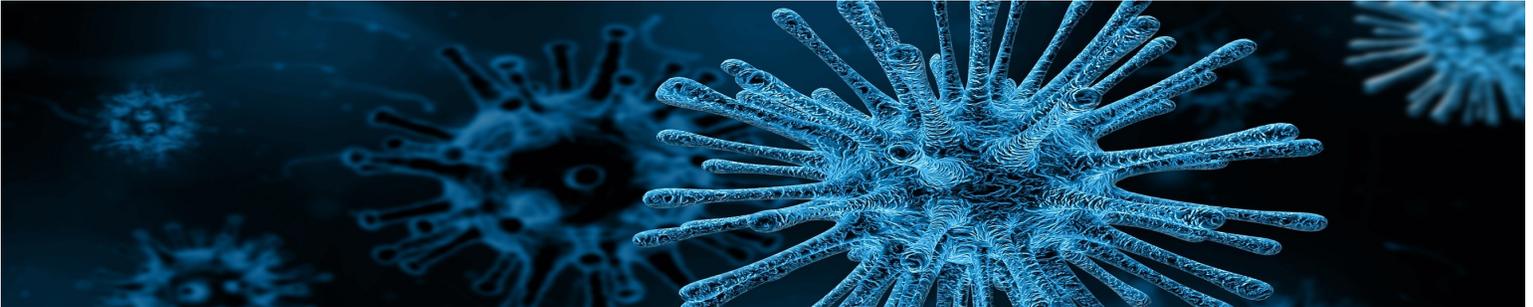


Vaccine FAQs



Are vaccines really that important?

Luckily, most of the illnesses

from which vaccines protect us no longer seem like much to worry about. That's only because vaccinations have done such a good job at protecting us from those diseases. Just like seat belts protect us from crashes that we don't expect to be in, vaccines protect us from germs we don't expect to be exposed to!

How do they work?

Like mug shots help the police to identify criminals and prepare to encounter them, vaccines help your body's immune system to know when and how to spring into action to fight off specific diseases. Some "mug shots" fade over time, and need to be updated. Some vaccines provide lifetime protection, but others will need to be given more than once in a person's life. Your immune system is the real hero - vaccines just give your body a head start on preparing the needed alert and defense systems.

Are they safe?

Before a vaccine is ever given to a person, it is tested for several years to make sure it is both safe and effective. Then, after human testing begins, it is studied for several more years. Even after it's licensed to be given to the public, it continues to be monitored and investigated. Sometimes there are mild side effects such as a low fever, soreness, or swelling at the injection site. These mean that the body is building immunity, and discomfort usually goes away within a few days. Severe side effects are very rare. When making decisions about vaccinations, it's important to remember that there are also risks that come from avoiding vaccines.

What's in vaccines?

The ingredients in vaccines are there for 3 reasons: to trigger your immune system, to keep the vaccine safe and long-lasting, or they are ingredients that are used in the production of the vaccine. Some of these include:

- Adjuvants help boost your body's immune response. They're also found in aspirin, antiperspirants, and antacids.
- Stabilizers help keep the vaccine effective after it's made. Some of these are already existing naturally in our bodies and some are found in foods like Jell-O.
- Diluted formaldehyde prevents the vaccine from getting contaminated with harmful bacteria. The amount of formaldehyde is so small, that when compared to the amount that occurs naturally in the body, it isn't a concern.
- Thimerosal is a preservative used in some multi-dose bottles of vaccines, but it's not used in the single-dose type of flu shots that are given here at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic.

Why are vaccines combined?

Combination and multiple vaccines are safe and mean fewer trips to the clinic. This saves you time and money, and can be less upsetting when your child is getting vaccinated. Children are exposed to a variety of germs every day. Multiple vaccinations offer multiple protections.

We rarely think about diseases such as polio, tetanus, rubella, measles, whooping cough, mumps, or even the flu. That's because vaccines work. Want more information? Call us, or visit www.cdc.gov/flu or www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/flu

Health Information

How To Tell Good From Bad

The enormous amount of health information that's available to us has both benefits and problems. We can learn what we need to know to make informed health decisions. We can also become overwhelmed and confused, and not all the information out there is accurate. Sometimes, it can be hard to tell the difference between reliable information from incorrect information. Here are some tips to help.

To learn more, visit https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/evaluating_health_information/

Is the source trustworthy?

- **Who are the authors? Who published the information?**
Are they objective? Are they associated with a university, governmental health agency, or other credible association?
- **What are their credentials?**
Do they have the expertise and education needed to provide accurate information? Lots of people have gone to Google University, but that doesn't mean they can safely give health advice.
- **Is the information peer reviewed?**
This helps ensure that a group of trained professionals have evaluated the information for accuracy.

Is the information accurate?

- **Is the information based on scientific evidence and supported by facts?**
The most reliable information comes from randomized, controlled studies, but other types of research and opinions of respected experts can also be valid.
- **Do other sources back up the information?**
When you get your health information from articles from the internet, magazines or newspapers, remember that it is coming through the filter of someone else's interpretation. Is the foundational information based on scientific evidence, and the educated views of an expert, or is it simply the opinion of the writer based on their hunches?
- **Is the information current?**
New discoveries are being made all the time, and our understanding of health is always expanding. Check to make sure the latest research supports the information that you're considering.

Red flags to watch for:

- **If you can't identify the author or the source of the information, ask yourself, "Why not?"**
Hidden authorship keeps you from being able to determine if they are likely to be fair and objective or if they might have undisclosed motivations.
- **Do they have another agenda besides education?**
Are they trying to sell you something or trying to get more followers? Get more information from a trust-worthy, neutral source.
- **Are there sources of bias that might color the information that they choose to share?**
All people have ways of thinking that make them likely to pay more attention to some data and less attention to other information. That bias can unintentionally impact what information that they pass on.
- **Is the source claiming a "secret" or "miraculous" cure?**
Be suspicious, do more research, and see if you can find other evidence to back those claims.
- **Be thoughtful about information obtained from internet chat rooms or bulletin boards.**
Although these places can be sources of support, there are usually no safeguards to ensure the accuracy of advice. Anyone can post anything, whether it's true or not. Double-check any advice and information acquired there.
- **Are the spelling and grammar poor?** This can mean poor overall quality control. Verify the accuracy of any claims.