

No More Measles! The Truth About Vaccines and Your Health

Laurie Endicott Thomas

Chatham, NJ: Kermit Press, Chatham, NJ, 2015; Paperback and digital formats, 343 pages, \$25.00.



Vaccines are among the simplest, most successful, and most cost-effective means of public health promotion and infectious disease prevention. Vaccine-preventable diseases such as tuberculosis, polio, diphtheria, pertussis, and measles can lead to illness, blindness, disfigurement, long-term disability, and even death. According to a recent federal report, of all the children currently vaccinated, the incidence of vaccine-preventable deaths has reached an all-time low in the United States. Unfortunately, unfounded concerns promoted by anti-vaccination activists have led to a fall in vaccination coverage, causing the re-emergence of communicable diseases.

Laurie Endicott Thomas's primary goal in writing *No More Measles! The Truth About Vaccines and Your Health* was to inspire parents, physicians, health care providers, and scientists to work together to drive measles, mumps, rubella, and other diseases into extinction. Fear, misconceptions, and myths are the greatest obstacles in the fight to eradicate vaccine-preventable diseases. Unfortunately, vaccine-hesitant parents are more immobilized by fear of the vaccines than of the devastating effects of the diseases they prevent. Vaccination fears have even delayed the eradication of polio.

This highly informative book offers readers an engaging introduction to the rise of scientific and alternative medicine. It provides an excellent overview of the biology of infectious diseases as well as the history of the anti-vaccination movement. More importantly, it simply and clearly describes the theory of herd immunity and the success of disease-eradication campaigns. The book contains a wealth of information about the vaccine-preventable diseases and about the minimal risks and great benefits of vaccination.

The childhood vaccination schedule recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is designed to promote public health, not to sell vaccines to profit the pharmaceutical industry. Indeed, the vaccine industry struggles with slim profit margins considering the cost of development and production. On behalf of their children, many parents have chosen an alternate or delayed vaccine schedule, in the belief that they will decrease the potential for

adverse reactions and/or prevent overburdening the immune system with multiple vaccines. However, there is no medical evidence to support any benefit in delaying childhood vaccinations. Instead, delaying the administration of the vaccines leaves children unprotected from diseases longer. This practice also increases the risk of fever-related seizures, requires more trips to the physician, and reduces the likelihood that children will complete the full schedule of vaccinations.

Some anti-vaccination activists have argued that the additives and contaminants in vaccines such as aluminum, formaldehyde, and thimerosal have not been subjected to toxicity studies. Thomas explains in detail how the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) works to ensure the safety and effectiveness of vaccines in the United States. The FDA regulates what additives may be used in vaccines and keeps track of all reports of adverse events associated with vaccines. Despite many anti-vaccination activist claims that the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccination caused their child's autism, there is simply no scientific evidence from top researchers and scientists to support such a connection.

Many chiropractors oppose vaccination despite the overwhelming scientific evidence regarding safety, efficacy, and effectiveness. Often they portray vaccination as a personal choice and emphasize risk rather than benefit. This misleads parents into believing that diseases are preventable by regular chiropractic visits. Vaccination, however, should not be viewed as personal choice but as self defense—and community defense. In order to effectively eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases, physicians and other health care professionals must combat fears, misconceptions, and myths about vaccines. It would be in the best interests of our children and society to educate parents (and policymakers) so that they understand that the supposed risks to children's health are unfounded and that children will greatly benefit from being vaccinated against various debilitating and deadly diseases.

—Tara Ann Cartwright, PhD

Tara Ann is a medical writer and editor in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.