

Randall Neustaedter

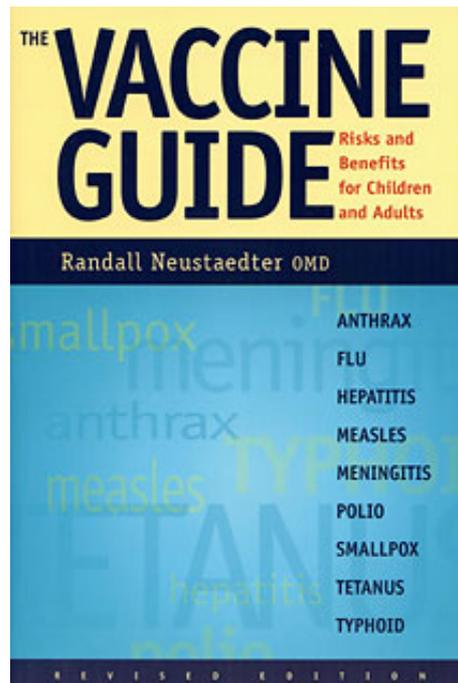
The Vaccine Guide

Reading excerpt

[The Vaccine Guide](#)

of [Randall Neustaedter](#)

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Preface to the New Edition

The Vaccine Guide now includes issues that relate to vaccination of adults as well as children. Smallpox and anthrax vaccines have emerged as urgent topics as a result of terrorist attacks on America. Since publication of the first edition, adult readers have repeatedly asked about flu vaccines and vaccination for international travel, and I have included chapters on these topics as well. Reports of new conditions associated with vaccine reactions have also appeared in research studies since the previous version of the book. Autism, asthma, diabetes, and the Gulf War Syndrome have each been directly linked to adverse vaccine reactions. A new edition seemed essential.

The accumulated evidence of devastating disease caused by vaccines is shocking and scandalous. These drugs that supposedly protect our population from deadly illness have been shown in recent years to wreak their own brand of havoc. The damage that vaccines cause on immune functions is now undeniable, but the repeated denial of serious adverse events and deaths by vaccine manufacturers is reminiscent of the tobacco industry's stonewalling. The power of drug companies and their influence in government has created a system where vaccine reactions are ignored and dismissed. Since 1986, drug companies have enjoyed immunity from liability for children's vaccine reactions.

In this protected environment, vaccine manufacturers continue to develop and dispense a growing number of increasingly expensive and dangerous vaccines. These vaccines are rushed into the market, where they undergo extensive testing on America's children. The tragic deaths caused by the rotavirus vaccine for diarrhea in children serve as a reminder of the dangers inherent in this vaccine industry process.

Within six months of being approved and recommended for all children, the rotavirus vaccine was withdrawn. Later investigations revealed that government committees ignored studies that warned of the vaccine's deadly side effects. In recent years, vaccine critics and outraged parents have demanded and won congressional hearings to investigate the newer childhood vaccines, their approval process, and the conflicts of interest inherent in a system where members of government committees are also paid representatives of drug companies.

Vaccine decisions are made in four circumstances.

1. Parents confront the issue of vaccines beginning with the birth of a child, and subsequent doctor visits focus on the ritual of vaccination.
2. Adults must decide whether to maintain the vaccinations begun during childhood.
3. When contemplating international travel, adults and children are advised to get vaccinated against exotic diseases.
4. The recent threat of bioterrorism has triggered an emergency interest in smallpox and anthrax vaccines.

Most parents are surprised to learn that they have a choice about vaccination. Usually, pediatricians do not give parents any information about potential adverse reactions. They assure parents that babies need vaccines and the ritual begins, first at their child's birth and then again at the two-month office visit. Parents may have made conscious choices about natural childbirth, circumcision, and breastfeeding, but never considered the issues surrounding vaccines. Adults, especially the elderly, are expected to get their flu shots every year. And now the issue of mandatory smallpox has once again made headlines, just as it did during protests against compulsory vaccination in the early twentieth century.

Who decided that our citizens require all of these vaccines? Why have we adopted a policy of universal immunization for every childhood ailment? Why is the public left out of a process considered too technical for their understanding? Who do we trust?

It is only in recent years that large numbers of people have begun to question routine medical procedures. People are voicing their own choices in health care. Questions have been raised about the overuse of antibiotics, the many unnecessary surgeries performed on breast cancer patients, and the useless procedure of infant circumcision. Even amidst criticisms of the medical establishment, however, very few assail the venerable institution of vaccines. We have been conditioned and convinced to accept vaccination as a savior of children and a miracle that freed us from deadly infectious disease. That refrain, repeated so often, has become a watchword of our culture. Politicians concerned about their ratings in the polls pick up a baby and announce their support for more immunizations to safeguard our children, an ever-popular position. In recent memory, President Ford energetically supported the swine flu vaccine catastrophe. President Carter sponsored an immunization campaign that increased Congress's allocated funding from 7 million to 47 million dollars within the first two years after his election. President Reagan passed the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986 to ensure adequate vaccine production. And President Clinton passed the Comprehensive Child Immunization Act of 1993.

Unfortunately, complete information about vaccines is not generally available. Parents feel poorly informed. Like most decisions about health care, the choice of which vaccines to give, the timing of vaccines, and their child's safety rest in the hands of the doctor. But doctors receive recommendations from vaccine advisory committees, and the committees rely upon studies conducted by drug manufacturers. Parents who do not make an informed choice place their child's health in the hands of drug companies with a profit motive.

Parents have the responsibility to provide the best health care possible for their own children. They must decide whether it is better for their child's health to give the vaccines or not. If parents question the validity or wisdom of administering vaccines to their child, they receive little support in their efforts to make an informed choice. Even adults who are advised to receive the vaccine for hepatitis, tetanus, typhoid, or flu have difficulty foraging through information on the Internet to make an informed decision.

This book is intended to help parents investigate the subject of vaccination, and to guide readers to an informed choice about each vaccine. *The Vaccine Guide* provides consumers with information about the diseases, the vaccines, their risks and their benefits. Parents, especially, need to know the issues and the controversies surrounding these drugs, since the potential adverse effects of vaccines are usually cloaked in secrecy. Medical professionals have often stated that broadcasting adverse effects of vaccines to the public would cause unnecessary concern and hinder vaccine campaigns. Dr. Paul Meier summarized this position quite clearly in a panel discussion on the efficacy of the polio vaccine campaign of the 1950s:

It is hard to convince the public that something is good. Consequently, the best way to push forward a new program is to decide on what you think the best decision is and not question it thereafter, and further, not to raise questions before the public or expose the public to open discussion of the issues (Intensive Immunization Programs, Hearings, 1962).

Similar sentiments were published later in a more recent dialogue concerning the release of information from a study that suggested the measles vaccine could cause chronic intestinal disease. The Chief Medical Officer of England's Department of Health wrote, "It would be most unfortunate if the publication of this controversial work led to public anxiety over the safety of measles vaccine" (Caiman, 1995). The authors of that study responded, "We reported the measles vaccination study for discussion by the scientific community, not only with many qualifications . . . but also with great care not to excite media over-reaction. . . . We realized that the measles vaccination programme is of great importance to the community and the public health of the nation, but it would have been unethical to suppress this result because its preliminary conclusions were uncomfortable or inconvenient" (Thompson *et al.*, 1995a). I would commend the ethical stance of these authors. Unfortunately, information about vaccine reactions is constantly suppressed because such findings run contrary to policy decisions about vaccination.

The passage by Congress of the National Childhood Vaccine Injury

Act has required more disclosure about vaccines and encouraged informed consent, but parents still have little information about the vaccines, and suppression of information remains a goal of many pharmacies and pediatrician organizations. For example, when the American Academy of Pediatrics' former president, Dr. Martin Smith, reviewed information brochures for parents prepared by the US Department of Health and Human Services, he recommended that they be simplified. He said, "The length and complexity of the materials . . . would confuse many parents and could even needlessly alarm them" (AAPNews, 1989).

Parents are hungry for information about the vaccines, especially their adverse effects. They are unwilling to blindly accept the opinions of doctors concerning medical care. This book seeks to provide information that is usually unavailable to parents.

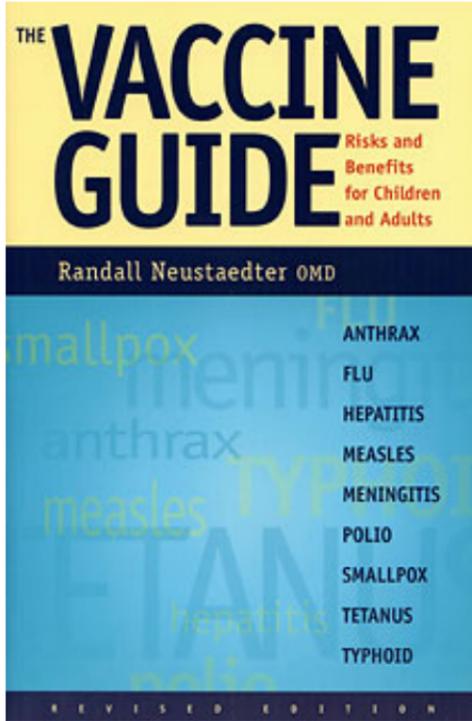
The Vaccine Guide also places the issues surrounding vaccines within the context of a health care philosophy. Natural medical care and alternative medicine support the body's own healing mechanisms, and the result is a stronger, more resilient immune system. Modern technological medicine manipulates the immune system with drugs, a process that sometimes goes awry, resulting in a self-destructive immune reaction. When consumers view vaccinations as part of an overall medical philosophy it places vaccine choices within a more familiar perspective, one they have given a lot of thought.

The subject of vaccines can be confusing and overwhelming. In *The Vaccine Guide* I have simplified the issues without sacrificing the detail that consumers need to make an informed choice. I present the ideas and facts here as I do with patients in my office. I state the facts about each disease and vaccine, summarize the information, and present the options regarding individual vaccines as a personal strategy. Ultimately, each individual and parent must decide what is best based on their philosophy, comfort level, and understanding of the real issues that surround vaccinations. Only then will your choice be based upon intelligent reasoning and not blind faith.

I recommend that you read at least the first chapter, "Making an Informed Choice," and the Conclusion of this book, to understand the philosophical issues involved in making a choice about vaccina-

tion. The second chapter, "Adverse Vaccine Reactions," presents a sobering view of the damage caused by vaccines, effects that have led many observers to note that our program of eliminating infectious disease through vaccination has resulted in an epidemic of devastating chronic illness. The other chapters about legal requirements and the individual diseases can be studied individually as reference materials when you are confronted with a new vaccine.

A note on conventions used throughout the book is warranted here. The words "vaccinate" and "vaccination" are used to denote the process in preference to "immunize" and "immunization" because vaccines do not always induce immunity. In fact, vaccines very clearly suppress the immune system. Although vaccine research is conducted throughout the world, legal issues and statistics discussed in the book usually refer to the United States. Other issues relating to vaccine effectiveness, reactions, and options should be applicable in all developed nations.



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Risks and Benefits for Children and Adults

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The Canadian Immunization Guide is a comprehensive resource on immunization. The guide consists of 54 chapters organized into 5 parts. Chapters are updated as new evidence becomes available. The efficacy of a single dose of measles vaccine given at 12 or 15 months of age is estimated to be 85% to 95%. With a second dose, efficacy is almost 100%. Reactions to MMR vaccine are generally mild and transient and include pain and redness at the injection site, fever less than 39°C, and rash. The Vaccine Guide is a website and a book by Ashley Everly, a toxicology consultant for Health Freedom Idaho. It's been making the rounds in the antivaccine underbelly of social media lately and basically consists of screenshots of cherry picked studies, articles, and web pages, with Everly's highlighting passages to provide an antivaccine spin. And then there are the anti-vaccine folks who want Newsom to veto SB 276 so that kids can continue to get inappropriate medical exemptions and remain unprotected and at risk against vaccine preventable diseases. I am a pediatrician trying to do the best I can for the children in my practice. And the best is not simply repeating that vaccines are safe and effective. Because they're not 100% safe. Because they're not 100% effective.