

Vaccinating Our Children: A Shot in the Dark Dr. Witticar

In the May issue of *Health & Healing*, I told you about the two most common sources of toxic mercury: seafood and dental amalgams. But there's a third source of mercury that you should know about, particularly if you are the parent or grandparent of a young child or are expecting to have a child: vaccines.

Until recently, a form of mercury called thimerosal was used as a preservative in many of the vaccines given to infants and young children, including vaccines for hepatitis B, influenza, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib). Congressman Dan Burton (R-Indiana), who spoke before the House Committee on Government Reform's hearing on mercury and medicine last year, knows just what this poison can do to the delicate brain and nervous system of a young child: his once-healthy grandson, who was given vaccines for nine different diseases in one day, now suffers from autism.

In Burton's estimation, his grandson may have received, in the space of a few hours, 41 times the amount of mercury at which harm can be caused. Unfortunately, his grandson's experience is not unique.

Mercury Destroys Brain Cells

As I mentioned in the newsletter, mercury is a neurotoxin that is especially damaging to the developing brain and nervous system. A growing number of researchers believe that the soaring rates of neurological and developmental disorders in our children can be linked to a corresponding increase in the number of government-mandated vaccines.

The number of compulsory vaccines has increased from 10 to 36 in the past quarter-century, and over that time period, there has been a simultaneous increase in the number of children suffering from disabilities that prevent them from reaching their full potential. The incidence of learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder has doubled in the past 25 years, while autism has increased by an incredible 200 to 500 percent in every state in the U.S. in just the last decade.

Thanks to pressure from concerned physicians, scientists, and involved citizens, the U.S. Public Health Service in 1999 requested that vaccine manufacturers make efforts to reduce or eliminate mercury from their vaccines. At this time, mercury-free versions of most vaccines given to infants and small children have become available. However, in some cases these represent additions to the vaccine market — not replacements for mercury-containing vaccines, which are still being marketed and sold.

Avoid "Triple-Threat" Vaccines

Insisting on mercury-free vaccines for your child will eliminate some but not all of the risk associated with vaccinations. Another problem has to do with "trivalent" vaccines (those containing three different diseases in one shot, such as the measles-mumps-rubella, or MMR, vaccine). Some researchers have linked trivalent vaccines with a dramatically increased risk of autoimmune diseases, including insulin-dependent diabetes, asthma, multiple sclerosis, lupus, Crohn's disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, and rheumatoid arthritis — not to mention autism and attention deficit disorder.

As with mercury in vaccines, there is a way to avoid this problem: insist upon monovalent (single-disease) vaccinations. Most physicians' offices do not keep these on hand, so you'll need to request them in advance.

Make an Informed Decision

Keep in mind that having your child vaccinated is a choice, not a requirement. All states allow for medical exemptions, and all but two (Mississippi and West Virginia) allow for religious exemptions. Some enlightened states even allow for philosophical exemptions.

Only you can make this difficult decision. Before your child's next vaccination, I urge you to take some time to educate yourself about the relative benefits and risks of vaccines. One good site to visit on the Internet is the National Vaccine Information Center, www.909shot.com. The NVIC was founded in 1982 by parents of vaccine-injured children to create a centralized reporting system for vaccine injuries so that more children would not be harmed. Since then, it has become a valuable resource for accurate information about vaccine safety and informed consent.