

# Vaccines: Dispelling the Myths

There are currently a few bills being considered by the state legislature that relate to vaccinations. As such, the Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED) has put together these facts to dispel some of the myths.

## Myth

Pediatricians “push” vaccines because they are getting kickbacks from pharmaceutical companies and insurers.

## Fact



Physicians administer vaccines based on the evidence-based vaccination schedules developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on

Immunization Practices (ACIP), which consists of a group of medical and public health experts.

Some insurers offer financial incentives to physicians for keeping health care costs low; however, the incentives are based on physicians performing a comprehensive list of preventive services aimed at preventing illnesses and keeping patients healthy and out of the hospital.

In addition, the Physician Payments Sunshine Act requires applicable manufacturers of drugs, devices, biologicals, or medical supplies to annually report to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services certain payments or other transfers of value made to physicians and teaching hospitals. This data is available to the public.

## Myth

When physicians ban unvaccinated patients from their practice, it's simply an access to care issue. An unvaccinated child does not put other children in harm's way.

## Fact



Physicians take an oath to do no harm — to protect the patients they serve. An unvaccinated child in the waiting room at the pediatrician's office who may be carrying an infectious disease such

as measles could make others sick — for example, babies who are too young to receive certain vaccines or a child who medically cannot be vaccinated and depends on herd immunity to stay as healthy as they can.

## Myth

Herd immunity isn't a real thing.

## Fact

Herd immunity, also known as community immunity, is very real. It protects everyone, but is especially important because some people can't get vaccinated for certain diseases — such as those with weakened or failing immune systems.



Source: <https://www.vaccines.gov/basics/work/protection>

See how herd immunity works: <https://www.historyofvaccines.org/content/herd-immunity-0>  
<https://www.historyofvaccines.org/content/herd-immunity-0>

## Myth

All CDC recommended vaccinations are required for children to attend school.

## Fact

The intent of the Pennsylvania school vaccination regulations is to ensure that school children are immunized against diseases which spread easily in schools and can disrupt the learning environment. Therefore, vaccinations for diseases that are not easily transmitted in the school setting are not required for attendance in school.

School vaccination requirements for attendance in Pennsylvania schools: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/School%20Health/SIR8.pdf>

School vaccination regulations: <https://www.pacode.com/secure/data/028/chapter23/subchapCtoc.html>

CDC recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/child-adolescent.html>



*continued on back*

## Myth

Some pediatricians make parents sign waivers when they refuse to vaccinate their children. There is no good reason for this.

## Fact

Yes, some pediatricians require parents to sign waivers when they go against their recommended advice, such as following the CDC's vaccination schedule. But, it's not without good reason.

Federal law mandates that physicians discuss the risks and benefits of every vaccine with parents as well as provide parents with a Vaccine Information Statement for each vaccine. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that physicians also document a parent's refusal to vaccinate that focuses parents' attention on the unnecessary risk for which they are accepting responsibility, similar to all other refusals of recommended care.

Vaccine Information Statement requirements:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/about/facts-vis.html>

Source: [https://www.aap.org/en-us/documents/immunization\\_refusaltovaccinate.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/documents/immunization_refusaltovaccinate.pdf)

## Myth

Vaccines have horrible ingredients. No one researches them and they are just thrown into vaccines.

## Fact

Vaccines go through a rigorous approval process with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).



The FDA requires that vaccines undergo a rigorous and extensive development program in the laboratory, as well as in animal studies and human clinical trials, to determine their safety and effectiveness. Highly trained FDA scientists and clinicians carefully evaluate all of the information and make a determination whether to license (approve) a vaccine before it can be used in the U.S. Prior to licensure, as part of the FDA's evaluation, it takes all of the ingredients of a vaccine into account, including the active ingredients as well as other substances. After the FDA approves a vaccine, it continuously monitors its safety.

Source: <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/safety-availability-biologics/common-ingredients-us-licensed-vaccines>

## PAMED Positions on Vaccine-Related Legislation

- ▶ **HB 286 (Rep. Metcalfe)** — PAMED opposes this legislation. It would force physicians to treat unvaccinated children and also prevent them from requiring parents/guardians to sign a waiver as a condition for continuing to provide care.
- ▶ **SB 653 (Sen. Leach)** — PAMED supports this legislation. It would remove the religious and philosophical exemptions from school vaccination requirements.