

## **To Vaccinate or Not to Vaccinate- That is the Question.**

When it comes to whether or not you want to vaccinate your children, you do have a choice. Although most feel that vaccinations are absolutely mandatory and required before a child can enter school, as Americans, you do have a choice when it comes to vaccinating your children.

Vaccine laws and requirements are determined by the state, therefore different states have different laws. In New York State, there are two possible exemptions to vaccination, Medical and Religious. Some states also allow for a philosophical exemption, meaning that your health related philosophy is one that does not support the use of vaccines. But in New York State, this philosophical position is currently invalid and cannot be used as a legal exemption to vaccination. Medical exemptions must be written by a Medical Doctor and/or Osteopath and detail good cause as to why the baby should not be vaccinated. Certain factors should be considered when determining if a baby is at risk of adverse vaccine reactions, and every parent should know them if they do decide to vaccinate their child. According to the National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC), parents and doctors should ask eight questions before they vaccinate.

1. Is the child sick right now? No child should be vaccinated if they are sick, as this puts a greater strain on their already vulnerable immune system.
2. Has the child had a bad reaction to a vaccination before? If so, then it is then you must be very careful since the child may be more predisposed to adverse and/or potentially fatal vaccine reaction.
3. Does the child have a personal or family history of vaccine reactions, neurologic disorders, severe allergies, or immune system disorders? All these conditions can be triggered by vaccine reactions and can also predispose the child to adverse reactions.
4. Do I know if the child is at high risk of reacting? By answering the first three questions you will have a pretty good idea.
5. Do I have full information on the vaccine side effects? Ask your doctor to supply you with the literature concerning side effects of the vaccine you are thinking of giving the child. Your Doctor is required by law to provide you with vaccine benefit/risk information before your child is vaccinated.
6. Do I know how to identify a vaccine reaction? Common vaccine reactions include redness and swelling over the site of injection, fever, malaise, and lethargy. Vaccine reactions can also include vomiting, headache, high-pitched screaming, personality changes, loss of muscle tone, respiratory distress, seizures and death.
7. Do I know how to report a vaccine reaction? First go directly to your Doctor and report the reaction. Your Doctor is required by law to report all adverse effects, including injuries or deaths that occur within 30 days after vaccination to federal health authorities. You can also call the National Vaccine Information Center @ 1-800-909-SHOT.
8. Do I know the vaccine manufacturer's name and lot number? This information is important and your Doctor is required by law to keep a permanent record of all vaccines given, including manufacturer's name and lot number. By knowing this information, it will be easier to track potentially tainted vaccine lots and prevent them from doing further harm.

All of these questions will help decide whether your child is a medical risk for adverse vaccine reactions. If your child has not had any previous health problems and you cannot find a doctor to write a medical exemption, then the only other way to by-pass vaccinations in the State of New York is through a religious exemption. It is our constitutional right as citizens of the United States of America that we have a freedom to practice religion. Remembering this indisputable fact, if it is your personal religious belief that drugs and chemicals should not be put into the body because it interferes with the innate healing mechanisms, you have the right to honor that belief and not be submitted to vaccinations against this religious belief. State officials and vaccine organizations have stressed to me that when applying for a religious exemption, you are required to put in writing your religious belief and must keep the letter purely religion orientated. Once you start to throw in philosophical or scientific beliefs, your exemption can be denied. It is also helpful to get a letter from a church or religious official stating your participation in the church and its beliefs regarding vaccination. Finally, it is a good idea to seek legal representation when going for a religious exemption. Contact the National Vaccine Information Center to find out what attorneys in your area deal with obtaining vaccine exemptions. For this information and so much more on the topic and controversy of vaccination please visit the NVIC website at [www.909SHOT.com](http://www.909SHOT.com).

Dr. Bernhard Sengstock is a licensed Chiropractor in the State of New York with 300 hours of post-doctorate study in Rehabilitation. His office is located at Universal Health & Rehabilitation, 152 Islip Ave., Suite 23, Islip, New York 11751. Please join us at our office for a Free Health Care Workshop titled, The Pros and Cons of Vaccination, January 24, 2001 @ 7:30 PM. Please call (631) 277-6767 for more information and to reserve your seat.