

After an outbreak of measles cases originating in the Orthodox Jewish communities, the New York State Legislature voted on June 13, 2019 to remove the religious exemption requirements for immunizations. Governor Andrew Cuomo immediately signed the bill, stating, “While I understand and respect freedom of religion, our first job is to protect the public health... [the new law] will help prevent further transmissions and stop this outbreak right in its tracks.”

Immunization Requirements

New York State Law (New York Consolidated Laws, Public Health Law - PBH § 2164) states:

“2. a. Every person in parental relation to a child in this state shall have administered to such child an adequate dose or doses of an immunizing agent against poliomyelitis, mumps, measles, diphtheria, rubella, varicella, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), pertussis, tetanus, pneumococcal disease, and hepatitis B, which meets the standards approved by the United States public health service for such biological products, and which is approved by the department under such conditions as may be specified by the public health council.”

The NYS Public Health Law further states,

“7. (a) No principal, teacher, owner or person in charge of a school shall permit any child to be admitted to such school, or to attend such school, in excess of fourteen days, without the certificate provided for in subdivision five of this section or some other acceptable evidence of the child’s immunization against poliomyelitis, mumps, measles, diphtheria, rubella, varicella, hepatitis B, pertussis, tetanus, and, where applicable, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), meningococcal disease, and pneumococcal disease;”

There were two exemptions to this requirement: (1) Medical, and (2) Religious; but the new law removed the second.

This means that “Children who are attending child day care or public, private or parochial school and who had a religious exemption to required immunizations, must now receive the first age appropriate dose in each immunization series ... parents and guardians of such children must show that they have scheduled appointments for all required follow-up doses.”

Medical exemptions can still be used to bypass the immunization requirements but must be provided and signed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in the State of New York, and “Contain sufficient information to identify the medical contraindication to a specific immunization.”² The medical exemption must be confirmed annually.

New York State Public Health Law (PHL Section 2164 (11) requires “Every school shall annually provide the commissioner, on forms provided by the commissioner, a summary regarding compliance with the provisions of this section.”

The law also permits the Department of Health to audit school records to ensure compliance to these legal requirements.

Immunization Risks

No loving parent would willingly endanger their children, and some fear that having their children immunized would do that.

So, the big question is – “**Are Vaccines Safe?**”

The American Academy of Pediatrics says: Vaccines are safe. Vaccines are effective. Vaccines save lives.”¹

They are not alone in making this claim – so does the Center for Disease Control, The American Medical Association, The U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services, and numerous others.

How can they all make this claim, when there are lots of articles on the internet saying immunizations are not safe?

First, the United States requires that all vaccines undergo extensive testing on safety and effectiveness before they can be brought to market. The process usually takes between 10 to 15 years (the sole exception to this rule is the flu vaccine).

Secondly, the Center for Disease Control’s Immunization Safety Office identifies possible vaccine side effects and conducts studies to determine whether health problems are caused by vaccines.²

Thirdly, scientific studies by multiple medical, governmental and nonprofit organizations around the world have proven that vaccines are basically safe and effective.

“Vaccines are very safe and very effective. Vaccines routinely recommended in the U.S. today provide high levels of protection against targeted diseases. The benefits of vaccines greatly outweigh their risks. The safest decision for parents is to vaccinate their children according to the recommended schedule.”³

Wait, what risks? I though you said vaccines are safe.

I did, but you must understand that nothing in this world is 100% safe. Adverse reactions to vaccinations are either minor (such as fever, sore arm, fatigue, etc.) or vary rare.

Parents are often concerned about the number of vaccines recommended for young children, the content of the vaccines including the presence of mercury, and the relationship between autism and vaccinations.

Research has been conducted on of each these topics, and the studies continue to find vaccines to be a safe and effective way to prevent serious disease.

For example, a study from Australia looked at more than 1.2 million children and found no association with autism and vaccinations. ⁴

But don't vaccines contain toxins?

Dr. Justin Smith writing for the Ethics & Religious Commission notes:

"Additive ingredients in the vaccines are not 'toxins.' They are chemicals found in nature. Your child will get more mercury from a tuna fish sandwich, more aluminum from breast milk or formula and formaldehyde from a pear than they will receive from vaccinations." ⁵

The American Academy's website provides summaries and links to over 20 recognized studies on this issue -<https://healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Vaccine-Studies-Examine-the-Evidence.aspx>

Are Vaccines Effective?

Yes, the evidence clearly shows that that they do prevent a vast variety of diseases, such as smallpox, chickenpox, measles, mumps, and polio.

For example, The U.S. saw more than 440,000 measles cases annually before the measles vaccine was implemented in 1963. By 1970, new infections shrunk to a tenth of that. The current measles "crisis" involves approximate 1,000 cases in the USA.

What about the Moral Issue?

Are some vaccines made from aborted babies?

No, except in a distant way. Some vaccines are cultured in human cell lines that originated from two aborted babies in the 1960's., which is unfortunate. Neither baby was killed to obtain the cells and they were collected post-mortem. These cells have replicated countless times in the past 50 years, so they are far removed from the original cell cultures. When the final preparation of the vaccine is made, it contains little to nothing of these fibroblastic cells. No newer fetal cell lines are ever used to make vaccines.

The moral issue is resolved if you think about a child receiving an organ transplant from a murder victim. The parents giving permission are not endorsing murder in any way, they are just seeking to save the life of their child.

Conclusion: Based on my study, I believe that Christians parents should vaccinate their children:

1. Because they are responsible for the care and well-being of their children (Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:5; Psalm 127:3)
2. Because vaccinations provide a safe and effective way to protect their children from many diseases that would be harmful to their health and well-being.
3. Because Christians are commanded to submit to government authorities (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13), unless obedience to man's law would mean disobedience to God's Law (Daniel 3 & Acts 4:19)
4. Because Christians are commanded to love their neighbor (Leviticus 19:18 & Luke 10:27).
5. Because it is the right thing to do (Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 6:8; etc.)

¹<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Emphasizes-Safety-and-Importance-of-Vaccines.aspx>

²<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/index.html>

³<https://hub.jhu.edu/2017/01/11/vaccines-autism-public-health-expert/>

⁴<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264410X14006367>

⁵<https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/3-reasons-christians-should-vaccinate-with-confidence>

⁶<https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-vaccinations.html>

The Truth About...

VACCINATIONS



Should Christian Parents Immunize Their Children?

Christians should base their decisions on faith and facts and not on fiction and fear.

By Tom Stiles



ARISE! MINISTRIES
MOUNT UP ON WINGS - ISAIAH 40:31