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### To Vaccinate or Not Vaccinate

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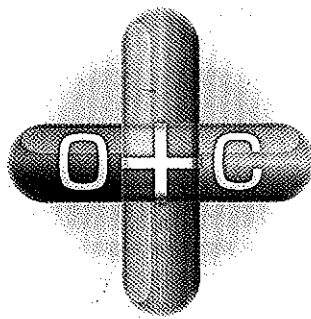
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# To Vaccinate or Not Vaccinate

By Brian Knoske and Samantha Morrison  
Rodney G. Richmond, RPh, MS, CGP, FASCP, FACFE

## Over The Counter

Harding University Center for  
Drug and Health Information

The year is 1796. For centuries, humans had waged the war against bacteria and viruses with little or no success, but things were about to drastically change. With a simple inoculation of cowpox, Edward Jenner found a way to prevent people from getting smallpox, a very deadly and, at the least, debilitating disease. This event effectively changed the landscape for treating infectious diseases forever. Since that time, vaccinations have been a mainstay of general health and wellness. Diseases such as tuberculosis, smallpox and polio have been virtually eliminated from the United States because of stringent vaccination policies which have become standard medical practice. Over recent years, however, there have been rampant attacks on vaccinations, producing two opposing views on vaccine administration.

The anti-vaccination movement is based on a "study" done by Dr. Andrew Wakefield in 1998. Dr. Wakefield, a British physician, set out to determine whether there was a link between routine vaccination of children and their development of autism. His "research" supposedly demonstrated a significant correlation between vaccinations and autism or autoimmune diseases. However, it wasn't until after Dr. Wakefield's work was published that news of fraud, study bias, and falsification of data became known—revealing his own selfish interests because he was developing "safer" vaccines that would not cause autism or autoimmune diseases. Shortly after the scandal broke, Wakefield's study was retracted and his medical license revoked. Unfortunately, these actions have not stopped people from quoting his paper as justification for avoiding vaccinations. Even celebrities have taken up the cause and used Wakefield's personal opinions as a platform to convince people not to vaccinate.

The "bad science" having been scrapped, it became critical that proper research be performed, without bias, to examine the actual risks of vaccines. Over the past decade more than a dozen studies have been published, emanating from all corners of the globe, revealing there is in fact no correlation between vaccines and the development of autism or autoimmune diseases. So now the question is, "To vaccinate or not to vaccinate?"

Current scientific evidence supports that it is imperative for children to continue to become vaccinated, and that as adults we should receive periodic boosters or vaccines to prevent disease. These vaccines are not given solely to protect the individual, but also to confer "herd immunity" as a way to prevent disease from affecting individuals too young or unable to be vaccinated because of coexisting diseases. If more evidence is needed to make the case for vaccination, it is necessary to look no further than the increasing number of preventable diseases and deaths that are occurring as a result of growing numbers of children not being vaccinated. If we return to our stringent vaccination practices, we may succeed in eliminating many preventable diseases! ☼

For more information, talk to your pharmacist or doctor or visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

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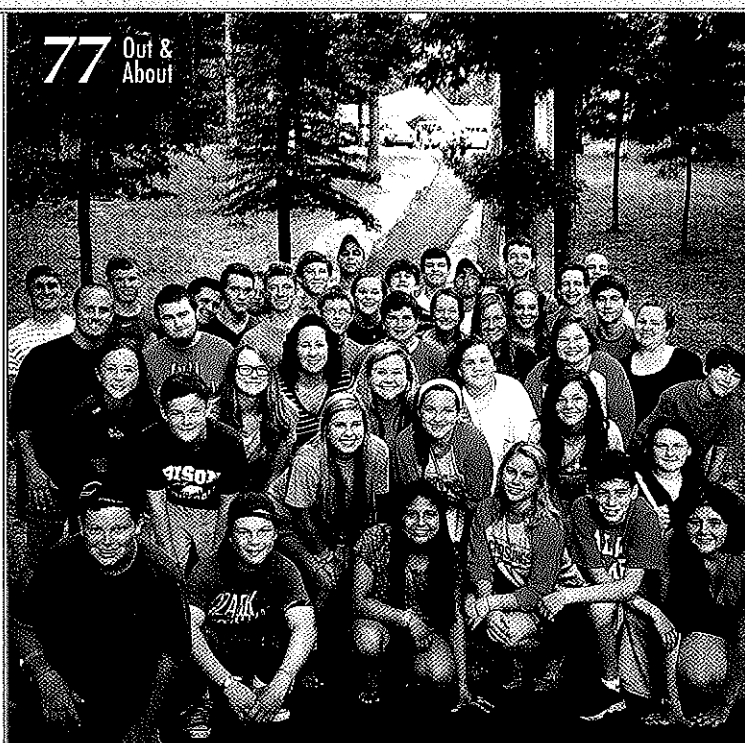
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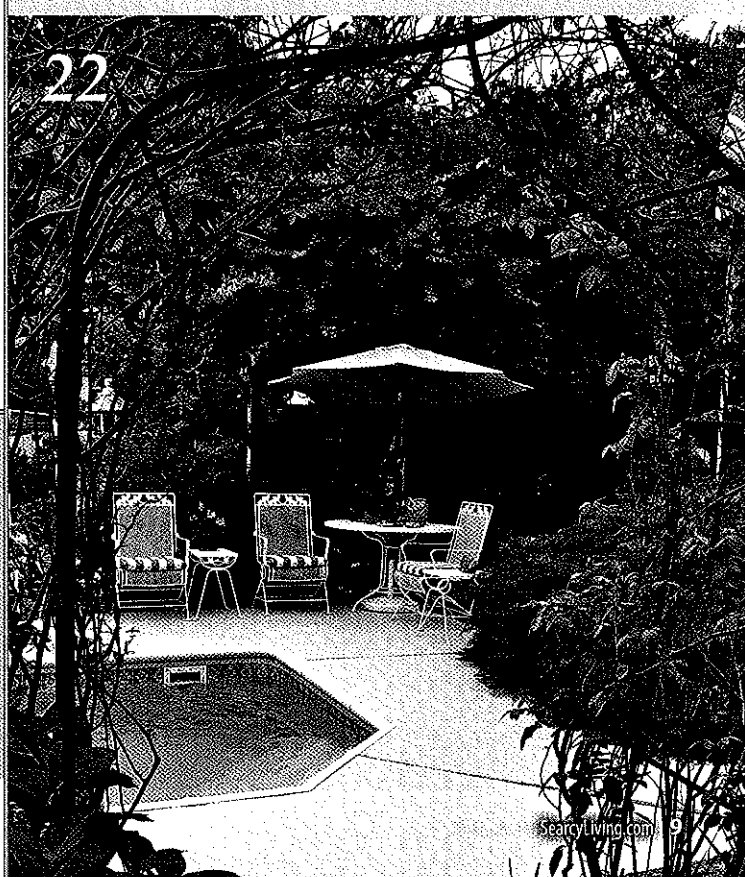
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77 Out & About

*"What you do today can improve all your tomorrows."*

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