



Vaccine Misconceptions

- Answers

1. Natural immunity is better than acquired immunity.
False. Natural immunity occurs when exposed to the actual disease. While it can prevent an individual from getting the infection again, the individual may become very ill, suffer long term health effects, or in some cases, risk death. Acquired immunity through vaccination does not carry these same risks.
2. The needle will hurt.
True. You might face a sharp scratch, but this will go away very fast. Sometimes you will feel a sore arm after the vaccination, but this is because the body is working hard to kill or eliminate all of the vaccine organisms. It is this process which provides the individual immunity against future disease.
3. You will get side effects from the vaccination.
Sometimes. Side effects are very rare and depend on the vaccine being received. A sore arm or feeling tired can be common, as the body is working to produce the antibodies required to fight the vaccine. Side effects are very carefully monitored and a vaccination will not be approved if the risks of negative side effects outweigh the benefits.
4. The diseases we are vaccinated for are so rare, I won't get the disease.
False. Diseases we are vaccinated for are rare because of vaccines. Vaccination has successfully reduced the prevalence of fatal diseases including polio, measles, and now, COVID-19 amongst many others. However, if people stop being vaccinated for these diseases, we will lose our herd immunity and the number of people infected will increase. This is why it is so important to take the vaccinations recommended by your doctor, to ensure you protect yourself and others.
5. Vaccines are not safe.
False. Vaccines go through a rigorous process of trials in labs, on animals, and on humans to check that they are effective and to monitor for side effects. All vaccines delivered in the UK have to be approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) who make sure that all medicines and vaccines meet rigorous standards. Once approved, health officials continue to monitor the side effects of vaccines and can respond quickly if there is any evidence to suggest that a vaccine is no longer safe.