

Vaccines and Health Choices: *The terrain is everything.*

Vaccines are one of modern medicine's greatest triumphs. For the past sixty years, public health authorities have been on a mission to eradicate as many microbial diseases as possible. Their successes are impressive. Smallpox is gone, polio exists in very few places in the world, and measles is no longer a common childhood disease.

But has it improved our overall health?

While the mission may have been successful at eradicating certain acute diseases, as a whole, our nation is sicker than ever. According to a 2013 international health analysis comparing rates of sickness and mortality among 17 affluent nations, the US comes in last. In spite of the world's most extensive vaccine schedule, today's young Americans have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

It's time to change the mission.

I propose that eradicating more microbial diseases will not make us healthier. In fact, it appears that our incessant need to wipe out germs has helped to create the current set of problems we're facing.

Good health is determined by much more than microbial disease. Louis Pasteur, the 1800s biochemist who gave us pasteurization, is purported to have said on his deathbed, "*The microbe is nothing. The terrain is everything.*" Pasteur was recanting his germ theory - a theory that postulates that microbes alone cause disease. In spite of Pasteur's revelation, the germ theory largely runs our medical system today. As long as our prevailing medical model is focused on this theory, vaccines and other medications appear safe and necessary.

*"The terrain is everything."*

The terrain is the overall health of the system. It is the homeostasis, or balancing mechanism, of the body. When the terrain is out of balance, disease can enter and cause harm. As we eradicate microbes in the absence of improving the terrain, it *does not* improve our overall health. The terrain is affected largely by nutrition, exercise, and toxicity. It actually *relies on* billions of microbes living symbiotically with us.

As a nation, Americans are malnourished and overfed. Obesity is far too common, and the foods we eat are highly processed and genetically modified, lacking in vital nutrients while introducing toxic elements. On the whole, Americans tend to be sedentary. And the toxicity we're exposed to is appalling. Our children's detoxification systems are overloaded. Babies are born with hundreds of toxins already in their blood and the world they encounter is loaded with toxins, including those in vaccines.

It's not hard to see why vaccination has not solved our nation's health problems and never will. The mission is off focus. Instead of so much attention on the germ, we need to work to improve the terrain. Our children need good food and a less toxic world. They don't need more toxins injected into their bodies in order to improve their health. The long term effects of vaccines are still not known. As the US Supreme Court said, "vaccines are unavoidably unsafe." Let's refocus our attention on building a strong terrain, so our children and grandchildren can live long and healthy lives.

All of that being said, we in California are currently faced with a difficult mandate for our families. With the passage of SB277, vaccines will be mandated for school aged children beginning in the 2016 school year. There are several important points to know about this: don't go out and get your child vaccinated with all of these at once! If your child is entering daycare, kindergarten, or 7<sup>th</sup> grade this will affect them. If your child is in another grade and you don't wish to have them fully vaccinated, get a personal belief exemption on file with your school before January. We are collecting signatures for a referendum to put this issue on the ballot, which would delay the implementation of the bill. (If you'd like to sign the referendum, there's one at my office). Medical exemptions are worth exploring if there is a family history of autoimmune disease or an allergy to a vaccine component. If you want help coming up with a schedule that makes sense for your child, make an appointment with your doctor or with me to discuss the schedule and strategies to keep your child as healthy as possible during the process.

It's important to understand that children with a strong terrain will most likely do just fine with the vaccines, especially if given after the first year of life and on a slow schedule. These children would also most likely do just fine with the disease should they be exposed to it. The focus on your child's health should be on building a strong, resilient system and working with detoxification systems in order to prevent or mitigate side effects from vaccines. Feeding a good diet, getting sunlight and exercise, giving probiotics, and avoiding medications and other toxins whenever possible will go a long way toward improving your child's response to the vaccines. Specific strategies for detoxifying from a vaccine include silica, vitamin C, Epsom salts, and reishi mushrooms. Vaccine reactions require the help of a naturopathic or homeopathic doctor in order to clear the toxins from the system as quickly as possible. We all want our children to be healthy and resilient so they can handle whatever life brings to them. Consider seeing a Naturopathic doctor, acupuncturist, or other holistic medical practitioner for your family's regular health care. Your holistic practitioner can help you determine when and if allopathic medications are needed and help mitigate their side effects. Let's help our next generation live longer and healthier lives.