

Vaccines: What You Should Know

(NAPSA)—While millions of children will be immunized against life threatening diseases this year, some of their parents will have questions about the safety or need for vaccination. A new book, *Vaccines: What You Should Know*, (Wiley, April, 2003, \$14.95) gives parents straightforward answers to their questions about vaccines and vaccine safety.

Written by pediatricians, Drs. Paul Offit and Louis Bell of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the book unlocks the mystery of vaccines and helps parents make informed decisions about what is right for their families. It answers the most common questions about how vaccines are made, when children should get vaccinated, and it also addresses parents' concerns about vaccine safety.

"Misinformation about vaccine safety can be very scary to parents, especially if they are having their first child. However, once parents have the facts about vaccines, they feel more comfortable getting their children immunized," says Paul A. Offit, M.D., Chief of Infectious Diseases, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Many parents no longer remember the horror of diseases that vaccines now prevent. Before the invention of the polio vaccine, upwards of 15,000 children were paralyzed from polio in the United States every year. Children were not allowed to swim in public pools for fear of contracting the disease. Now, there are no cases of polio in the U.S. Hib meningitis was the leading cause of acquired mental retardation in the U.S. Since the Hib vaccine was licensed in 1987, Hib disease cases have fallen from 15,000 to fewer than 200 per year. German measles (rubella) would cause birth defects and mental retardation in



as many as 20,000 newborns. Now, thanks to the vaccine that prevents infection, there are only about five cases of birth defects due to rubella every year. Vaccines have prevented more disease and death than any other preventive program in history.

Vaccines: What You Should Know helps parents wade through complicated medical jargon they may hear in the doctor's office and clarifies misleading or incomplete information they get from the Internet or other sources. Parents will get answers to such questions as:

- Is it still necessary to vaccinate my child?
- Can my child get vaccinated when he/she is sick or has an ear infection?
- Will vaccination weaken my child's immune system?
- Is it better for my child to be naturally infected rather than immunized?

An essential resource for parents who want to be sure every vaccination is truly the best for their child, *Vaccines: What You Should Know*, is available at bookstores across the country.