

BYU WELLNESS PROGRAM

HELPING You BUILD A HEALTHY FUTURE



IMMUNIZATIONS

By Gus Hoffman, MD, MBA

In writing this article, I would presume that the reader would know that I am prejudiced toward vaccines. Since the development of vaccines, beginning with Jenner and Pasteur, a multitude of lives have been saved because of vaccines. I can safely say that vaccines have saved more lives or prevented more disease than all other forms of treatment put together. When I was a child, I had classmates who developed polio; and the local swimming pools were shut down during certain times of the year. Because of the polio vaccine, there has been no polio in the Western Hemisphere since 1986, except for a small recent outbreak in the Dominican Republic in unimmunized children. Smallpox has been wiped out for almost 30 years. Over the life of vaccines, the following diseases have been controlled: smallpox (100%); diphtheria (100%); pertussis (95%); tetanus (97%); polio (100%); measles (99%); mumps (99%); rubella (99%); Hemophilus meningitis (95%); epiglottis (95%); and soon pneumococcal meningitis.

There are many misconceptions present on the Internet and in our society about immunizations. Those who advocate that they are not needed must not remember the havoc these illnesses have caused in families. Some of us who are older do remember. Most of the concerns expressed have been answered by repeated studies in this country and in Europe. For example, no relationship has been found between autism and the MMR vaccine, in repeated studies. There is definitely no relationship between SIDS and Hepatitis B vaccine. There have been no definite side effects noted with the use of Thimerosal as a preservative in vaccines. (It has now been removed.) When a vaccine shows unacceptable side effects, it is rapidly pulled from the market - as occurred with Rota virus vaccine.

Fortunately most of us have been vaccinated against the most common infections and thereby are protected; however, most probably need a booster to maintain our protection. For most that means receiving a Td booster (Tetanus-diphtheria) about every 10 years. If you become injured and it has been over 5 years since your last shot, a booster is recommended. Those of us who are older or who have a chronic illness receive a flu shot each year to try to prevent the illness. Last year the Wellness Program gave over 2000 flu shots on campus and this year we expect to give about 2200 to 2400. Last year for the first time children under four years were given the vaccine. Why? Because there are as many hospitalizations for children under four years for influenza as there are in the elderly over 65 years.

For those who will be traveling over seas this year,

immunizations need to be a part of your preparation. If you are going to a developed nation, there shouldn't be a problem. If you are going to a developing nation, consider getting the additional immunizations against Hepatitis A and Typhoid fever. These vaccines are quite protective. For Hepatitis A vaccine, you will have a life-long immunity with just 2 injections. Typhoid requires a booster every 3 years. If you are going to a tropical country, consider the Yellow Fever vaccine and Malaria prophylaxis. Yellow Fever vaccine is fairly benign, as concerns side effects, and is protective for 10 years. There is no vaccine yet for Malaria. Malaria prophylaxis requires the taking of an oral medication once a week beginning a week or two before leaving home and for 4 weeks after leaving the visited area. The medication is expensive. Other

vaccines, such as Hepatitis B and Cholera, may be optional. Cholera is not recommended because it is only 50% effective. Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended if you are a health worker or might be injured. The Hepatitis B virus is transmitted through IV drugs, promiscuity or blood transfusions, so that would not involve most of us. (With this vaccine, we offer a free consult with your bishop.) Lastly there are other vaccines that would be suggested depending upon the countries you would be visiting, i.e.. Japanese Encephalitis vaccine, Meningococcal vaccine.

Fortunately, because of vaccines, society is protected and most of us live healthy lives. Yet there are other areas where disease is prevalent and new vaccines are being developed. For example, there is research on a new flu vaccine that will give us protection for many years. By giving this to the young, a herd immunity may be developed and all others in society will then be protected. A vaccine is being developed to treat Insulin-dependent Diabetes and another to treat Multiple Sclerosis. New vaccines are being researched to treat those experiencing some forms of Rheumatoid Arthritis and for Group B Streptococcal disease in pregnant women. These are new vaccines to clear age old diseases. Isn't it marvelous what the good Lord has given us to make our lives more enjoyable and more healthy.

(For those traveling for BYU, immunizations and travel information are offered at the Student Health Center.)

*For more information about the BYU Wellness Program or wellness articles: www.byu.edu/wellness



Dr. Gus Hoffman

Defensive Driving Course



June 21

1:00 - 5:00 p.m. 269 UPB

Learn Safe Driving Tips!

Receive defensive driving certification for insurance purposes

Register online at www.byu.edu/wellness or call 378-5011

The BYU Wellness Program presents a “Pioneer Trek” 3K Fun Walk



Start off your Pioneer holiday with the BYU Wellness Program.

Where? Quad in front of the Maeser Bldg.

When? July 19, 11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

*It is the same route but with a different start and finish.

Wellness Tip of the Day!

How much do you have to exercise to boost your bone density?

Studies show that walking merely 1 mile per day can give your bones a leg up.

In one study, women who walked 1 mile each day had better bone density scores than women who walked shorter distances.

Of course, the more walking you do, the better off your bones will be. Women who walked more than 1 mile per day had even

