

Measles Mumps Rubella Vaccine (MMR) and autism

Summary information and where to find further information

What is MMR?

Measles mumps rubella vaccine (MMR) is a combination vaccine that protects against measles, mumps and rubella (German measles). The vaccine contains live viruses that have been modified to produce an immune response that protects children against natural infection, without causing the disease. The National Health and Medical Research Council recommends this vaccine is given to children at 12 months and 4 years of age, as part of the National Immunisation Program.

What are the side effects of MMR vaccine?

Refer to the consent form.

Does the MMR vaccine cause autism?

In February 2009, the U.S. Court of Federal Claims ruled that the MMR vaccine does not cause autism. This reflects the findings of 18 major scientific studies which have failed to show a link between vaccines and the widely-diagnosed neurodevelopmental disorder.

The decision was based on the overwhelming body of scientific evidence.

To access the three rulings, go to: <http://www.uscfc.uscourts.gov/node/5026>

Further resources on this issue:

1. The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance of Vaccine Preventable Diseases (NCIRS), based at The Children's Hospital, Westmead, Sydney, carries out research and provides independent expert advice about all aspects of diseases which can be prevented by vaccination, particularly in children.

The NCIRS has two resources which are of use to parents concerned about the MMR vaccine; a fact sheet about MMR and autism, and a decision aid which addresses queries you may have.

http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/mmr_autism.pdf

<http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/decisionaid/>

2. "MMR Vaccine Does Not Cause Autism: Examine the evidence!" presents 25 studies that refute any connection between autism and MMR. To access it, go to: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4026.pdf>
3. An article titled "Vaccines and Autism: A Tale of Shifting Hypotheses" by Drs. Jeffrey Gerber and Paul Offit is currently available online, courtesy of Clinical Infectious Diseases. To access this article in PDF format, go to: <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/596476>