

Study: MMR vaccine not linked to increased autism risk

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Another study has confirmed children who receive measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) are not at increased risk of autism.

The results come as 206 people in the U.S. have contracted measles this year, a number that continues to grow.

“We believe that our results offer reassurance and provide reliable data on which clinicians and health authorities can base decisions and public health policies,” authors wrote in the study “Measles, Mumps, Rubella Vaccination and Autism: A Nationwide Cohort Study” (Hviid A, et al. *Ann Intern Med*. March 4, 2019, <http://bit.ly/2EPa5eQ>).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Academy recommend children receive MMR vaccine at 12-15 months and 4-6 years. However, some parents hesitate to follow this guidance, citing a 1998 study from *The Lancet* linking the vaccine with autism. The study was retracted and many more have found no increased risk, but hesitancy remains a problem, putting children at risk of deadly diseases.

The new study is larger than many of its predecessors. Researchers analyzed data on 657,461 children born in Denmark between 1999 and 2010 and followed through mid-2013 using national health registries. Among that cohort, 6,517 were diagnosed with autism.

When comparing children who had and had not received MMR vaccine, the fully adjusted hazard rate was 0.93, indicating there was no increased risk of developing autism.

Further analysis found the results also held true for vaccinated children with a sibling who had been diagnosed with autism. Among girls, the risk of autism was lower in those who were vaccinated.

The largest risk factors for autism were having an older mother or father, low birthweight, poor Apgar score, preterm birth, large head, assisted birth and smoking in pregnancy, the team found.

In an effort to combat vaccine misinformation online, AAP President Kyle E. Yasuda, M.D., FAAP, [sent letters](#) Monday to the CEOs of [Google](#) (which owns YouTube), [Facebook](#) (which owns WhatsApp and Instagram) and [Pinterest](#) requesting that they partner with the Academy.

“The Internet and social media offer tremendous value as tools to help parents make informed decisions about their children’s health,” Dr. Yasuda wrote. “But we must ensure that the decisions are indeed informed, with credible, scientific information from trusted sources. The science is sound: vaccines are safe, vaccines are effective, and vaccines save lives.”

Resources

- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on autism](#)
- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on vaccine safety](#)
- [AAP clinical report "Identification and Evaluation of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders"](#)
- [AAP clinical report 'Countering Vaccine Hesitancy'](#)
- [CDC's Learn the Signs. Act Early. Program](#)
- [AAP autism initiatives](#)

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