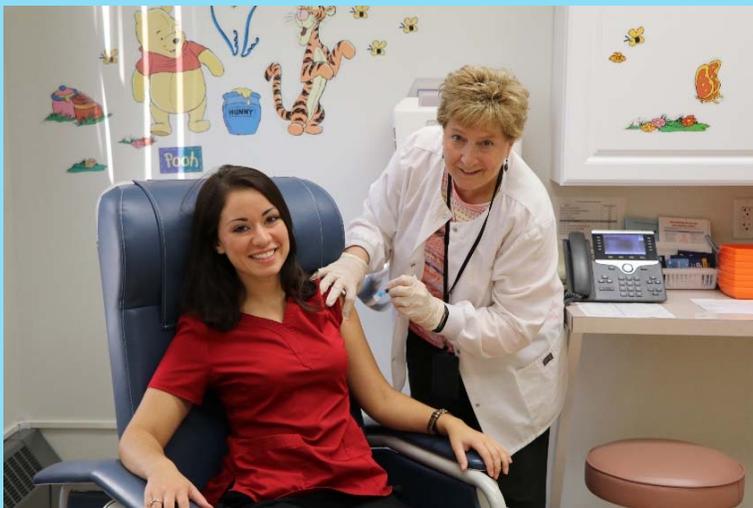




Why Do We Vaccinate?

Public health professionals are your neighbors and family members. We are mothers, fathers, grandparents, daughters, sons, sisters and brothers. Here are our stories, to share with you why we believe vaccines are vital to ourselves, our loved ones and our communities.

Niagara County



Why We Vaccinate

We vaccinate, not only to protect ourselves, but also to protect our whole community.

Beverly Lawler and Jonnie Fabrizio

Public Health Nurse and Registered Nurse at Niagara County Department of Health

As nurses and proud vaccinators and recipients of vaccines, we know that the diseases that vaccines prevent can be detrimental. There are varieties of severe complications that can result from these diseases, including death. Every day, regardless of your occupation or situation, we encounter people, some of which who are vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases, and may not able to protect themselves, therefore we have the moral responsibility to protect them. These people are our family, our friends, our coworkers, our neighbors, and our world. No child or adult should have to become ill or die from a vaccine preventable disease. This is why we vaccinate.

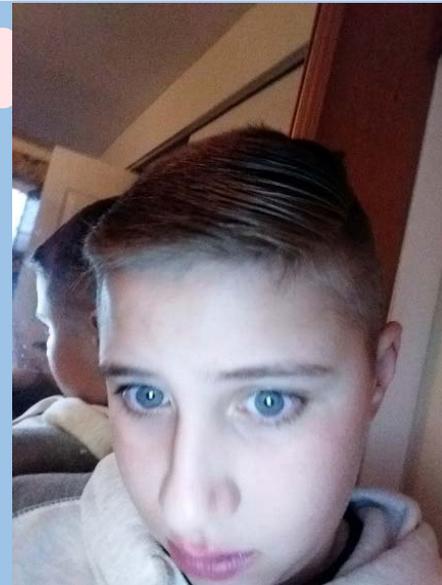
Oswego County

Why I Vaccinate

To protect him and his future

Betty J Dunsmoor, LMSW, ACSW, PhD

I spoke to my 11-year-old son about the HPV vaccine. I told him “This vaccine helps to prevent diseases that can cause some kinds of cancers when you get older, and it will also protect your future wife”. He did not hesitate, and actually spoke to his doctor himself about the vaccine. He has had both doses already and encourages his friends both male and female to talk to their parents about getting the vaccine. One female friend said to him, “I don’t want a shot, and he explained to her that “I would rather have a shot now, than cancer later”. This was a proud mom moment my son protected himself and his future wife. That simple shot and his choice to have the HPV vaccine reduced his and his future wife’s risk of developing some types of cancers that are now preventable.



Betty’s son John

Genesee County

Why I Vaccinate

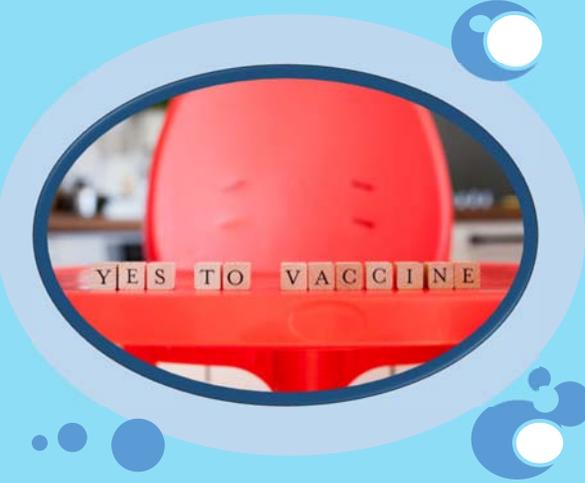
Because my dad had polio as a child.

Because of the polio, one of his legs was just a little bit shorter than the other. It was enough of a difference to make him wear a lift in his shoe and always have back pain throughout his life.

I vaccinate because I experienced having Mumps as a child. Although I do not remember having them, I do remember my mom telling me how scared she was because I was so sick.

I vaccinate because I got the chicken pox at 21 and missed my very first clinical rotation in college. I was afraid I would fall behind and not graduate on time. I missed 3 weeks of school! My little sister, at the age of 16, got it 2 weeks later. She was NOT happy with me. We both remember how uncomfortable we were and I was very sad for my daughter when she got them at 5.

I’m a grandma now and I want my grandchildren to grow up healthy and happy. My family agrees that vaccines can help to make this a reality!



Carla Wahls, RN BSN
Community Health Nurse

Ontario County



Matthew and his calf Daisy, 2016



Matthew after an asthma attack, 2018

Why I Vaccinate *...To ensure my son a long healthy life.*

I almost lost my son last year.

Matthew was born prematurely at Strong Memorial Hospital in 2010. Fortunately, as an infant he did really well in the hospital. As we prepared to take him home, we thought we were in the clear. But, the following year he was diagnosed with asthma and a life threatening peanut allergy.

We learned to juggle the nebulizer treatments, doctors' appointments and to avoid the triggers associated with his asthma and allergy symptoms. His condition comes with uncertainties. We spent his eighth birthday in the hospital with pneumonia. In addition, he has had two life threatening bouts with asthma which resulted in extended stays at Golisano Children's Hospital.

As parents, we are quick to make sure our kids are wearing helmets and are in appropriate car seats because we understand the power of prevention. Under the same principle, in our household we actively seek out recommended vaccines. A simple case of the flu could be life threatening for Matthew. Skipping or delaying vaccinations is not an option.

There are a lot of things I cannot control with Matthew's health conditions. I can ensure that he receives appropriate vaccines recommended by his healthcare team. For Matthew and kids with his condition, a skipped seasonal flu vaccination could be disastrous.

Christy Richards, RN, BSN, MPH, CLC
Public Health Educator

Monroe County

Why I Vaccinate *I get vaccinated because I am not interested in contracting a preventable illness.*

I get vaccinated because I have a responsibility to protect those who are legitimately unable to get vaccinated. My sister was unable to finish her dpt series because she had febrile seizures, which was a contraindication at the time. When she was in high school, she got pertussis, and for a healthy teenager, she got surprisingly sick!

Julia Weston-Town
Sister



Why I Vaccinate

To protect her future, even when she's not my little girl anymore.

When my teenager was 11, she hurt her ankle at a weekend sledding party. As I pulled into the parking lot at her doctor's office, I said, "While we're here today, you can get your first HPV vaccine."

"What's that for?" she asked.

I told her "It helps to prevent diseases that can cause some kinds of cancers when you get older."

"I want that, mom!" My daughter didn't want a shot, but she did want to reduce her risk of getting cancer.

Later, we talked about other ways to prevent exposure to HPV, but with that first shot, I protected my daughter against a virus that most people my age have. The HPV vaccine reduced her risk of developing cervical and other types of cancers that are now preventable – because of a vaccine.

Schoharie County



Cristina Dyer-Drobnack, MS
Program Director
NYS Association of County Health Officials

Lewis County



Ellen Scanlon, RN
Registered Nurse

Why I Vaccinate

I vaccinate because I was blessed with being entrusted to parenthood and caring for two precious lives.

Being brought up in the 60's we had vaccinations and did not question or it as an option to not get vaccinated. Our parents had seen the devastation of vaccine preventable illnesses so they were grateful that there was something that they could do. We all lined up in school with other children and ventured into the world of bravery whether we wanted to or not!

Once we became parents we chose our pediatrician and knew we would get the best guidance with this new venture into parenthood. We always felt well informed and trusted the professionals in keeping our babies healthy. I am happy to say my boys, now 27 and 28 lead a very healthy and active childhood and are healthy young men who get a yearly influenza vaccine and follow other CDC recommendations as they travel.

At every opportunity I recommend vaccinations and educate during these encounters so that my community can be a healthy place to live. I truly believe that vaccination is a shared responsibility and that knowledge should be shared to allay any fears or misconceptions giving others the facts to make an informed decision.

Jefferson County



Back row: Lisa Lagos, Jessica O'Hara, Deb Foisy, Faith Lustik, Melissa Reynolds

Front row: Ginger Hall, Patricia Barton, Jenna Flath, Jeffrey Leiendecker

Why We Vaccinate To protect our neighbors.

We know that being vaccinated decreases our risk of getting disease; therefore, it also decreases our risk of spreading disease to the people around us – our family, friends, co-workers, patients. Because of age or a weakened immune system some people can't get vaccinated and we especially want to help protect those neighbors! The more people that are vaccinated, the less disease is spread. This herd immunity helps keep our whole community healthy. It is one of the easiest ways to keep us, our family, and our community healthy.

Jefferson County Public Health Service

Why I Vaccinate To Protect my grandchildren.

I have 3 young grandchildren, 3 ½, almost 2, and 3 months, which are my pride and joy. As an immunization specialist, I insisted all the immediate family members be vaccinated against pertussis and flu before contact with the newborns (I was mostly successful!).

This past winter, my grandson, came down with symptoms that dogged him for approximately a week – high grade fever, lack of appetite, lethargy, His parents had him seen by his pediatrician after 5 days of medicating the symptoms without much success (despite times of marked improvement). Weren't we surprised to learn he had the flu (verified with a throat culture).... even I didn't suspect the flu! Thankfully, he had been vaccinated against the flu in the Fall. I know, deep in my heart, he would have been hospitalized had he not received the vaccine....which I truly believe prevented a worst case scenario.

Erie County



Karen Menza
Registered Nurse and Immunization Specialist

Albany County



Kilynn Erwin, RN
Immunization Program

Why I Vaccinate

I believe in protecting people from as many diseases as possible.

A sore arm or thigh from a vaccine surely outweighs a hospital stay from a disease, any day. Viruses don't discriminate, they attack healthy people as well those who are compromised. When I vaccinate a healthy person, I protect those who medically cannot be vaccinated.

Dutchess County

Why I Vaccinate

I chose to protect my family and my community from disease which is why I chose to vaccinate!!!

As a professional, I have seen what a vaccine does to a person vs. one who is not vaccinated against the disease. As a mother, I vaccinate to protect my child and her community from a vaccine preventable illness.

As a professional, I have seen and had to immunize children and young adults because of parents' actions and beliefs as "anti-vaccine". Many of the young adults later choose professional fields that require proof of vaccination. They realize that their parents' have done them a disservice; causing stress as they are must catch up to obtain all the required vaccines.

As a mother, I am confident and educated to know that I am doing what is right for my child's safety and wellbeing. I know that as she gets older, she will be protected against diseases and protect the immunocompromised or younger ones who for true medical reasons can't receive the vaccine.



Sandra Carrasquillo, RN, BSN, NYSAFE
Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and
Community Health

Madison County



Why I Vaccinate

To protect them as they leave for college.

My oldest daughter had received her Meningitis A, C, W, Y vaccine and I thought she was set for college. Then I learned she should also be vaccinated against Meningitis B. Although uncommon, this disease occurs at a higher rate among young people living on college campuses. The symptoms are like the flu and those infected could die as quickly as 24 hours after symptoms appear. It was a no-brainer – I wanted my daughter protected and scheduled her that week to be vaccinated. I understood that not everyone who receives the shot may be protected, however, not being vaccinated guarantees no protection. My younger daughter is currently preparing for college and like her sister, part of that preparation includes being vaccinated against Meningitis B.

Tricia Narolis
Mom, Member of the
Mohawk Valley Immunization Alliance

Montgomery County

Why We Vaccinate

So many reasons.

Our son was our little miracle baby. When my husband and I found out we finally were having a baby, we promised we would do what needed to be done to always keep him safe. As parents, we know it is not realistic to protect children from everything, but protecting him from preventable illness is something we can guarantee.

Now with the outbreak of measles, and increased deaths in children from the flu, we know we made the right choice for our son and our family. We have also made tough choices to not have him around friends who do not vaccinate their own children. As a parent, he is the most important person. **WE vaccinate because he deserves to be healthy and protected!!**



Sara Boerenko
Mom
Montgomery County Public Health

Erie County



Why I Vaccinate ***it protects my family and community.***

My father suffered a stroke years ago that left him paralyzed and unable to speak. My mother is his primary care giver. We vaccinate because it's one of the easiest ways to protect his health. Not only does it protect my family, but it also protects everyone in my community.

Robert Viets
Program/Project Manager
NYS Association of County Health Officials

Albany County

Why WE vaccinate ***My family vaccinates because we value the time we spend together and don't have time in the day to be sick.***

My son enjoys running, exploring, playing with his dog and sometimes getting into trouble so it is important that I am feeling 100% at all times to keep up with him. We care deeply about our family, friends, co-workers and neighbors which is another reason we vaccinate. It would be devastating to spread an illness to someone we love, particularly something that could have been prevented in the first place.

I want my son to grow up feeling empowered and confident enough to make decisions about his personal health, so getting vaccinated will be something I talk to him about when he is old enough. We are doing our part, as responsible members of our community, to protect others around us. I vaccinate because I care.



Sarah Ravenhall, MHA, CHES
Executive Director
NYS Association of County Health Officials



Why I Vaccinate

“I vaccinate to keep my family safe and know that I am doing all I can for my children.”

Peggy Poole
Niagara Falls, NY

Why I Vaccinate

“I lived in East Africa for 2 years – I’ve seen what happens when vaccines aren’t readily available.”

Cynthia Child
Rochester, NY



Why I Vaccinate

“I get vaccinated to prevent illness for myself, my family, and my community. Also, to model to others how crucial it is for Public Health.”

Andrea Levy
Program Manager at NYCDOHMH

Why I Vaccinate

“My family gets vaccinated to keep us safe and healthy. We are doing our part to help reduce the spread of deadly diseases in our community.”

Sue Brooks
Online Production Assistant/Web Page Manager at Center for
Continuing Public Health Education, UAlbany School of Public Health

