

The Immunize Kansas Coalition (IKC) represents about 40 organizations including primary care, oncology, public health providers, medical associations, public health researchers, and educators working together to improve vaccine rates and protect Kansans against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Purpose of Immunization

“Vaccinations provide immunity to a variety of communicable diseases. Before vaccines were routinely available, the only way to become immune to a disease was to catch it. Getting immunity this way has the risk of contracting a life threatening illness. Today, children and adults can get immunity through vaccination” (CDC, 2017).

How Vaccines Develop Immunity

With vaccination, killed or weakened disease germs are intentionally introduced into the body, usually by injection. Then your immune system goes to work, just as if you were exposed to a disease:

- 1.** Your immune system recognizes the vaccine germs as not belonging in your body– as being “foreign invaders.”
- 2.** It responds by producing antibodies, which help destroy these germs, the same as if you had been exposed to the disease. But there is a difference. The germs in the vaccine are weakened or killed, so they won’t make you sick.
- 3.** You develop immunity, just as if you had gotten sick from the actual disease. Your body remembers the germs that made you sick, and if they ever try to infect you again – even after many years – your immune system will come to your defense again. Immunity is what keeps you from getting sick from diseases like measles or chickenpox a second time, no matter how often you are exposed to them.

In other words, getting a disease or getting a vaccine can both give you future protection from that disease. The difference is that with the disease you have to get sick to get that protection. With the vaccine you don’t.

Safety of Immunization

Vaccines are held to the highest standard of safety. The United States currently has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in history. Vaccines undergo a rigorous and extensive evaluation program to determine safety and effectiveness.

“The United States has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in its history. The vaccine safety system ensures that vaccines are as safe as possible.”

Sources:

www.cdc.gov/vaccines

 **More Information:**
ImmunizeKansasCoalition.org

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