



# IMMUNIZE KANSAS COALITION

The Immunize Kansas Coalition (IKC) is a group of Kansas providers, health department officials, researchers, educators, healthcare payers, associations, nonprofits, vaccine producers, school nurses, pharmacists, parents, grandparents and more working together to improve vaccine rates and protect Kansans against vaccine-preventable diseases.

**MOST Kansans believe vaccines are important,** but a very small, vocal minority of adults want childhood vaccination to be *optional*. IKC believes this would be as dangerous as allowing people to treat traffic signals as *optional*.

Freedom is very important to all of us, but the safety of individuals in our community depends on a balance between rights and responsibilities.

Treating childhood vaccines as optional would be as dangerous as allowing people to treat traffic signals as optional.

**These infections have serious consequences.** The notion that these diseases are “mild” is medically inaccurate. Vaccine- preventable diseases cause permanent consequences such as paralysis, limb amputation, hearing loss, blindness, seizures, brain damage, and **death**.

**Prevention is better than treatment.** We have medicine to treat some vaccine-preventable disease (e.g., pertussis), but not most (e.g., mumps, diphtheria, polio). Some bacteria and viruses have developed resistance to medicines.



**Vaccines save lives.** We know that vaccines have eliminated or dramatically reduced the incidence of many infectious diseases. Experts around the world agree on this. In the U.S. giving children born *in a single year* all routine vaccines can prevent 42,000 early deaths and 20 million cases of disease.<sup>1</sup> Vaccines also save money. **Every \$1 spent on childhood vaccines saves \$10.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> <https://bit.ly/2YvAbNL> <sup>2</sup> <https://bit.ly/2BdDW1o>

**These infections are still among us or are just a plane ride away.**

- Vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, mumps, and pertussis continue to infect U.S. children, resulting in hospitalizations and deaths every year.
- Tetanus spores are in the soil and will never be eradicated.
- Some of these diseases are abroad. If children are not vaccinated, they could easily be infected from contact – even indirect contact – with a traveler.



**U.S. vaccine safety standards are high.** Before being licensed in the U.S., scientists, doctors, and the federal government carefully review the data to make sure they’re safe. The FDA licenses vaccines only after randomized controlled trials; then there is continuous monitoring after licensure. Standards are high because vaccines are given to healthy people.

If every parent exempted their child from vaccination, these diseases would return to Kansas in full force.

**Let’s keep improving, not go backwards.** For each disease you see the difference between the number of people in the U.S. who became sick per year before the vaccine versus in 2019.

Disease	Cases/Year Before Vaccine	Cases/Year in 2022	Percent Difference
Diphtheria	21,053	1	100%
Measles	530,217	122	> 99%
Mumps	162,344	323	> 99%
Pertussis	200,752	2,388	99%
Polio	16,316	1	> 99%
Tetanus	580	24	96%

The primary benefit of vaccination is protection of the vaccinated child. An added benefit is that vaccinated children are less likely to spread their infections to others, including pregnant women, classmates, and elders. Vaccinations - and the regulations that require them - protect individuals AND communities as a whole.

State regulations recognize that if too many people go without vaccination the spread of dangerous viruses or bacteria could increase dramatically, threatening the public with disease outbreaks.

**What about children who cannot receive a vaccine due to a medical condition?** In order to attend school, such children simply need a physician-signed certificate stating that a medical condition prohibiting vaccination is currently present.

**Maintain our childhood vaccination policies.** Evidence shows that if nonmedical exemptions are easy to obtain, exemptions increase and vaccination coverage decreases. In turn, this increases the risk for outbreaks of vaccine preventable disease.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc1209037>

## Answers to 2 Common Questions

**Vaccines do not contain aborted fetuses.**

In the 1960s, scientists used fetal cells to develop cell lines to grow certain viruses used in vaccines. Though these cell lines are still used today, no vaccines use cells directly from aborted fetuses.<sup>2</sup> Bioethicists at the *National Catholic Bioethics Center* have considered this and concluded vaccination is permitted because it protects the life and health of children and those around them.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bit.ly/2YD4FO9> <sup>3</sup> <https://bit.ly/31hkdsr>

**Aluminum is an adjuvant.** It's added to some vaccines to help induce a stronger immune response. Aluminum is the third most common element on Earth. During the first 6 months of life, a breastfed infant will take in more aluminum through their diet than via recommended vaccinations.

**We stand together in making this strong recommendation for vaccination.** Our state organizations all strongly support vaccination programs validated by science. This includes, for example, the KS School Nurse Organization, KS Medical Society, KS Cancer Partnership, KS Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics, KS Academy of Family Physicians, and KS Hospital Association. For physicians, vaccinating isn't about profit; it's part of giving quality care.



**We are about prevention for all Kansans!** It is important to listen to the vast majority of Kansans who want protection based on medical science. Scientific evidence is not as showy as a protest or as trendy as what's shared on social media, but we must give the scientific evidence our careful attention. Public support for vaccine programs is at risk because of rampant misinformation. **It's crucial to protect all individuals in Kansas with the proven benefit of vaccination.**

Vaccines are about healthy individuals, healthy communities, and reducing the impact of vaccine-preventable disease, which transcends partisanship.

## Recommended Immunization Resources

Kansas Immunization Program  
[kdheks.gov/immunize](http://kdheks.gov/immunize)

Immunize Action Coalition  
[vaccineinformation.org](http://vaccineinformation.org)

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Vaccine Education Center  
[chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center](http://chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center)



Learn more about IKC and vaccines at [immunizekansascoalition.org](http://immunizekansascoalition.org)