

Champs on the case: tackling the big health issues for your community

Our neighbourhood health champions are people you know and trust to ask questions on your behalf. They say it like it is: and this time they are asking doctors all things medical on vaccinations.

Wendy Simms asks: **Can vaccinations cause autism?**



Dr Miah, The Robert Darbshire Practice responds:

I'm really glad you asked that because it could be something that people have thought about. But, vaccines do not cause autism, or have any role in the onset of autism. The vaccines cannot 'trigger' autism in children who are more likely to have it, either.

Sometimes parents find out from a doctor that their child has autism at the same time that the child is due to have vaccinations – and I think that has caused this worry that it is linked to a vaccine.



Anita Prince asks: **So why do some children have autism?**



Dr Miah, The Robert Darbshire Practice responds:

It's important to remember that autism is not an illness and it doesn't stop people from having a good life. It means that a person's brain works in a different way to other people. It is something you are born with, but may not be recognised until your child is a little older or in some cases, as an adult. Autism is unique to each person and it tends to run in families linked to certain genes. It is not caused by anything like infections or diet and it's certainly not from 'bad parenting' or vaccinations.



Ifra Mohamed asks: **Would you give your child the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine?**



Dr Elamin, Manchester Integrative Practice responds:

Yes, without any doubt. These 3 infections can lead to really serious problems like meningitis (inflammation of brain), blindness and hearing loss. It's also really serious if you are pregnant and you get any of these infections because it can hurt the baby.

It takes 2 separate doses for the most protection possible. It's never too late to ask your doctor for the vaccine if you or your children have not had it. And, if you are worried you could ask a health champion to go with you and you can also ask for vaccines that do not contain any pork gelatine.



Subbulakshmi Dharmaraj asks: **People are so worried about money and other pressures at the moment. Does it cost anything to have the vaccines?**



Dr Elamin, Manchester Integrative Practice responds:

A lot of people are really worried about bills, food and heating, especially now as it gets colder. We want to help as much as possible. The vaccines are free and mean that your child doesn't have to have time off school through catching any of these illnesses like measles, mumps and rubella, which might then mean a parent isn't able to work, either.

Also, there is a free advice line run by Manchester City Council that can help with any worries over money, debt and feeding your family. That team also want to help and their telephone number is 0800 023 2692. You can also text on: 07860 022876.

