Vaccines and Autism FAQs

Do vaccines cause autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?
- There is absolutely no link between vaccines and autism.
- Some people have had concerns that ASD might be linked to the vaccines children receive, but studies have shown that there is no link between receiving vaccines and developing ASD. In 2011, an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on eight vaccines given to children and adults found that with rare exceptions, these vaccines are very safe.

What is thimerosal?
- Thimerosal is a vaccine additive, added to some vaccines to prevent germs (like bacteria and fungi) from growing in them. If germs grow in vaccines, they can cause illness — or even death.

Why do some people worry about thimerosal in vaccines?
- You may have heard that thimerosal has mercury in it. Not all types of mercury are the same. Some types of mercury, like mercury in some kinds of fish, stay in the human body and can make people sick.
- Thimerosal is a different kind of mercury. It doesn't stay in the body, and is unlikely to make us sick.

Is thimerosal safe?
- Yes. Thimerosal has been used safely in vaccines for a long time (since the 1930s). Scientists have been studying the use of thimerosal in vaccines for many years. They haven't found any evidence that thimerosal causes harm.

Is thimerosal still used in vaccines for children?
- No. Thimerosal hasn't been used in vaccines for children since 2001.
- However, thimerosal is still used in some flu vaccines. Yearly flu vaccines are recommended for all children. If you are worried about thimerosal, you can ask for a flu vaccine without it.

Is there a link between thimerosal and autism?
- No. In 2004 a report from the institute of Medicine (IOM) found that thimerosal (an organic mercury compound that's been used as a preservative in vaccines since the 1930s does not cause autism.

For Vaccine Schedules and Guidelines visit:
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html

Frequently asked questions gathered from:
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/index.html