



# Vaccines & Autism: Unraveling the Myth



**I'm wondering about autism. Are vaccines safe for my child?**

**Vaccines do not cause autism.**

Many studies around the world, involving hundreds of thousands of children, have all found the same thing: vaccines do not cause autism.



**But wasn't there a study showing a link between vaccines and autism?**

**The myth is based on lies from a discredited study.**

In 1998, a man named Andrew Wakefield published a paper claiming there was a link between the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine and autism. Scientists were very concerned and did many studies to try to find the link. Then experts learned that Wakefield had faked data for this paper. Why? He wanted to mislead people so that he could make money selling a competing vaccine.

Wakefield lost his license to practice medicine in his home country, the U.K. The journal that published the paper withdrew it. Since then, no one, not even Wakefield, has been able to show any link between vaccines and autism.



Learn More: [kingcounty.gov/immunization](https://kingcounty.gov/immunization)



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## Why shouldn't I trust Wakefield's study?

**The study was unethical in many ways.**

**Wakefield wanted to make money.** Even before his study, Wakefield was paid by lawyers who wanted to create doubt about the MMR vaccine. In fact, Wakefield was trying to produce his own measles vaccine, and he didn't want any competition.



**The study was too small.** The study included 12 children. This is too small to represent the general population.

**Wakefield made up data about study participants.** Wakefield suggested that MMR vaccine caused the children in his study to develop autism. In reality, some of the children had developmental issues, like autism, before they were vaccinated. Other children were never actually diagnosed with autism.



## Well then what causes autism?

**Autism doesn't have a single cause.**

Vaccines do not cause autism. We know that autism can be influenced by many things, including genetics and a child's environment. With support and love from parents and caregivers, autistic children can lead happy and productive lives. Vaccination is one of the safest, most effective steps you can take to protect your child's health, now and in the future.

