

## Myth busters:

### Setting the record straight with Dr Sooraj Natarajan

**NHS**



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As a GP, I hear many questions from parents about vaccines. Here are the facts to help you make informed decisions about your child's health.

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#### ✗ Myth:

Flu is just a bad cold.

#### ✓ Fact:

Flu can cause serious illness, especially in young children and people with existing health conditions. Each year, healthy children are hospitalised with flu complications, and tragically, some children die from flu. It's much more severe than a common cold.

#### ✗ Myth:

The vaccine gives you flu.

#### ✓ Fact:

The nasal spray contains weakened viruses that cannot cause flu. Your child might get a runny nose, but this isn't flu.

#### ✗ Myth:

They had it last year, so they're protected.

#### ✓ Fact:

Flu viruses change each year. That's why the vaccine is updated annually to match the most common strains.

#### ✗ Myth:

Vaccines contain harmful ingredients.

#### ✓ Fact:

All vaccine ingredients are present in safe amounts and are thoroughly tested for safety and effectiveness

#### ✗ Myth:

Vaccines overload a child's immune system.

#### ✓ Fact:

Vaccines use only a tiny portion of the immune system's capability. Every day, children touch, eat, and encounter things that give their immune system much more to deal with than a vaccine does.

#### ✗ Myth:

Natural immunity is better than vaccine-acquired immunity.

#### ✓ Fact:

Natural infection can lead to serious complications. Vaccines offer safe, effective protection without the risks of the disease itself.

#### ✗ Myth:

Childhood illnesses like measles aren't serious.

#### ✓ Fact:

Measles can lead to pneumonia, brain inflammation, and even death. Vaccination helps prevent these severe outcomes.

#### ✗ Myth:

The MMR vaccine causes autism.

#### ✓ Fact:

There is no link between the MMR vaccine and autism. This myth stems from a discredited study that has been thoroughly debunked.