

The Healthy Buzz



Fresh tips, tasty bites, and growing strong—together!

WELCOME TO *THE HEALTHY BUZZ*

Advocates for Healthy Kids is here to cut through the noise and bring parents the practical, balanced information they need to raise strong, healthy families. From real-life nutrition tips to clear breakdowns of hot-button health topics, this newsletter delivers resources, ideas, and encouragement — so you can stay confident in the most important role you'll ever have: **being your child's greatest advocate.**

A NOTE FROM DR. DUNNAVANT



Dear Friends,

Something is changing in how the country talks about children's health, and I think most parents can feel it.

The conversation is shifting. There's more room now for questions, for nuance, for the kind of shared decision-making that recognizes families aren't all the same. That's a good thing. And it's long overdue.

For parents who have ever felt rushed through an appointment, or uncertain about where to turn when experts don't agree, or simply overwhelmed by the volume of information coming at you from every direction — I want you to know that your instinct to ask questions is not a problem. It's the right starting point.

This week we're focusing on what it looks like to navigate conflicting guidance with confidence. Not panic, not paralysis — confidence. The kind that comes from understanding the landscape,

finding a provider you trust, and knowing that your role in your child's healthcare isn't optional. It's essential.

You don't have to have all the answers. You just have to stay engaged.

Warmly,

Dr. Siobhan Dunnivant, MD

Senior Advisor, Advocates for Healthy Kids

FACT OR MYTH?

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When health experts disagree, it means the science isn't trustworthy.

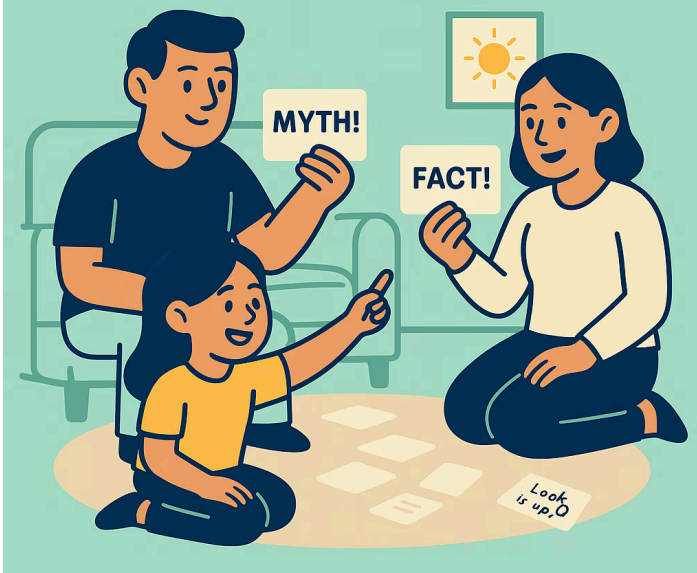
Keep up the conversation!

Follow us [@adv4healthykids](#) for useful tips, clear breakdowns on hot-button issues, and encouragement to stay empowered and confident in your role as a key part of your child's growth.

ADVOCACY ACTION



Fact or Fear?



The "Fact or Fear?" Card Game

A quick, lighthearted game that builds critical thinking skills in kids of all ages.

Kids absorb information constantly from friends, screens, and overheard conversations. Learning to pause and ask "is this actually true?" is one of the most useful habits they can develop. And it's genuinely fun.

How to do it: Write 10-15 statements on index cards — a mix of true facts, common myths, and silly ones. Take turns drawing a card and deciding: fact, myth, or "I need to look it up." The "look it up" pile gets researched together at the end.

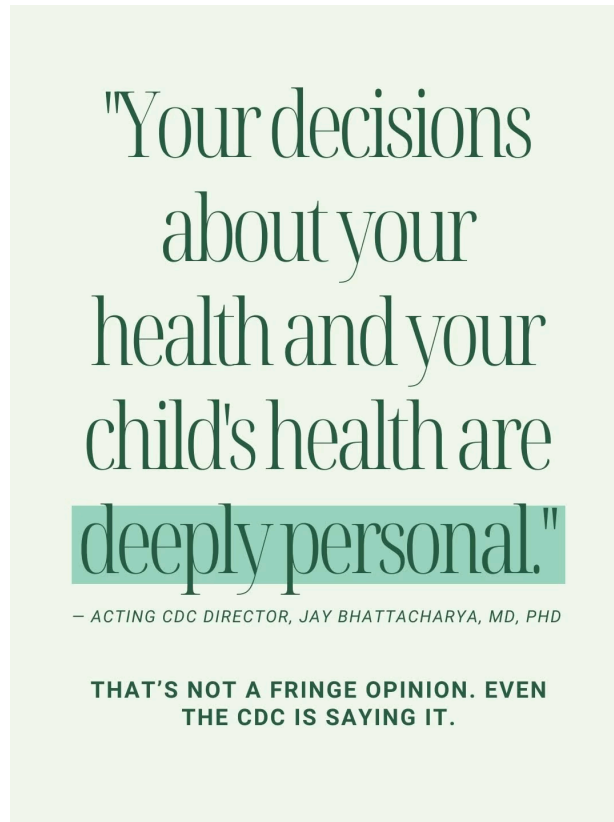
A few to get you started:

- "The Great Wall of China is visible from space" (*myth*)
- "Your heart beats about 100,000 times a day" (*fact*)
- "You only use 10% of your brain" (*myth*)

Bonus tip: Let kids make their own cards. The ones they write reveal a lot about what they've absorbed from the world around

them, and spark some of the best conversations.

THE LATEST



If you haven't seen it yet, this one is worth a few minutes.

Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, Acting Director of the CDC, recently posted a video statement — and something he said deserves more attention than it's getting.

He didn't lecture. He didn't mandate. He said health decisions are deeply personal, and that his goal is simply "healthy children, thriving families, and strong communities."

For parents who have spent years feeling talked at instead of talked with, that's a meaningful shift in tone from the top of one of the country's most influential health agencies.

Most parents aren't anti-anything. We just want the freedom to make the decision that's uniquely right for our family — with good information, a doctor we trust, and no pressure from anyone.

That's not radical. That's parenting.

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

When Health Experts Disagree: How Parents Can Navigate Conflicting Vaccine Guidance with Confidence

If you've been paying attention to health headlines lately, you may have noticed something unusual: two major medical authorities, the [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), are no longer recommending the exact same childhood vaccine schedule.

For many parents, that raises an understandable question: *If the experts don't agree, how am I supposed to know what's right for my child?*

We're not here to tell you what decision you should make. We're here to help families understand **why disagreements happen**, what they actually mean in practice, and how to move forward calmly and confidently without fear, pressure, or blind trust.

First: What's Actually Different?

The AAP recently [reaffirmed its recommendation](#) that children be immunized against **18 diseases**, including RSV, hepatitis A and B, rotavirus, influenza, and meningococcal disease. These recommendations have not changed from what pediatricians have followed for many years.

The CDC, meanwhile, [revised its guidance](#) to recommend routine vaccination against **11 diseases**, shifting several others such as RSV, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, and COVID-19 into a category called ["shared clinical decision-making."](#) This means vaccines remain available and covered by insurance, but decisions are intended to be made through a discussion between parents and their child's healthcare provider.

Importantly, **both organizations still agree on the core vaccines** protecting against serious illnesses like measles, polio, whooping cough, tetanus, and chickenpox.

So this isn't a case of one side saying "vaccinate" and the other saying "don't." It's a difference in how broadly certain vaccines are recommended — not a rejection of vaccination itself.

Why Do Expert Groups Sometimes Disagree?

To many parents, expert disagreement feels alarming. But in medicine, it's not unusual, especially when recommendations are updated to reflect new data, changing disease patterns, or different philosophies about how guidance should be applied.

The AAP and CDC also serve **different roles**:

- The **CDC** issues population-level guidance and often considers international norms, access, and large-scale implementation.
- The **AAP** focuses specifically on infants, children, and adolescents, providing guidance designed for everyday pediatric care in the United States.

Both rely on scientific evidence. They may simply weigh risks, benefits, and delivery differently.

What matters most for parents is this: **a disagreement does not mean the science has disappeared or that parents are suddenly on their own.**

What “Shared Clinical Decision-Making” Really Means

You may hear this phrase more often now, and it can sound vague. In practice, shared clinical decision-making means:

- Parents are encouraged to ask questions
- Pediatricians discuss benefits, risks, and timing
- Family values, health history, and risk factors are considered
- No one is rushed or forced into a decision

This approach recognizes something many parents already believe: **one-size-fits-all guidance doesn't always fit every family.**

How Parents Can Move Forward With Confidence

When expert opinions diverge, the most powerful position parents can take is an informed one. A few practical steps can help:

- **Look past the headlines.** Sensational coverage often oversimplifies complex decisions. Reading guidance directly from the medical organizations provides better context.
- **Ask your pediatrician real questions.** Pediatricians are trained to interpret evolving evidence and help families apply it to their specific situation. Having a provider you trust is foundational to making confident decisions.
- **Understand risk, not fear.** Vaccines are evaluated based on disease severity, likelihood of exposure, and safety data — not hypothetical worst-case scenarios.
- **Remember that choosing thoughtfully is not the same as choosing blindly.** Taking time to research and ask questions is responsible parenting.

Confidence Comes From Understanding, Not Certainty

Parenting has never been about outsourcing responsibility. It's about gathering good information, asking honest questions, and making decisions you can stand behind.

When experts disagree, that doesn't mean that the system is broken. It means healthcare is evolving, and families are being invited into the conversation.

And that's a good thing.

Want to begin your research journey? Our [Resources](#) page is a great place to start!

Why Vaccine Timing Matters — and How Parents Can Think About It Confidently

When conversations about childhood vaccines come up, the focus is often on whether to vaccinate. But for many parents, the bigger question is actually when.

Why are certain vaccines recommended at [specific ages](#)?

Why do some families choose to delay or space them out?

And how should parents think about timing now that some vaccines have been moved to "shared clinical decision-making"?

These are reasonable questions, and asking them doesn't make you reckless or anti-science. It makes you a parent trying to understand how to protect your child thoughtfully.

What Vaccine Timing Is Designed to Do

Vaccine schedules weren't created arbitrarily. Timing recommendations are built around a few core principles:

- **When children are most vulnerable to certain diseases**
- **How a child's immune system develops over time**
- **When vaccines have been shown to work most effectively and safely**
- **Real-world data on disease exposure and severity by age**

In simple terms, timing is meant to offer protection **before** a child is most likely to encounter a disease or before that disease is most dangerous for them.

That doesn't mean the schedule is the only possible approach. It does mean the recommended timing reflects data, ongoing safety monitoring, and careful consideration of risk versus benefit at different stages of childhood.

Why Timing Has Become Part of the Conversation Again

Recent changes to CDC guidance have shifted some vaccines into [a shared clinical decision-making](#) category. This doesn't mean those vaccines are no longer considered safe or effective. It means that instead of issuing a blanket recommendation for every child, the CDC is encouraging parents and pediatricians to talk through timing and individual circumstances together.

This shift acknowledges something many families already believe: **health decisions aren't one-size-fits-all.**

Factors like a child's health history, community disease risk, household exposures, and parental comfort all play a role. Timing becomes a conversation — *not a mandate*.

Why Some Parents Consider Delaying and Why That Matters

Parents who think about delaying vaccines are often motivated by the same instinct that drives every parenting decision: wanting to protect their child.

Common concerns include:

- Wanting to avoid overwhelming a young immune system
- Feeling uneasy about multiple vaccines close together
- Wanting more time to [research](#) and understand each decision

Acknowledging these concerns doesn't mean dismissing the science. It means recognizing that **confidence matters**. A parent who feels informed and respected is more likely to engage thoughtfully with medical guidance than one who feels pressured or talked down to.

At the same time, it's important to understand that delaying changes the window of protection. Timing decisions aren't just about comfort, they also affect when a child is protected against certain illnesses.

How Pediatricians Think About Timing

Pediatricians don't view vaccine timing as a checklist to enforce. They should view it as part of a broader picture of child health.

When doctors discuss timing, they're considering:

- The age at which a disease poses the greatest risk
- How severe illness tends to be in infants versus older children
- How well vaccines perform at different developmental stages
- Patterns of disease spread in the community

This is why many pediatricians recommend schedules that prioritize early protection, while also recognizing that families may need flexibility and conversation to get there. *The most important piece of this is finding a pediatrician you trust to have honest conversations with.*

How Parents Can Approach Timing Decisions Practically

If you're thinking about vaccine timing, a few practical steps can help you feel grounded and confident:

- **Focus on understanding the "why."** Ask what the timing is designed to protect against and at what ages risks are highest.
- **Separate urgency from pressure.** Some decisions are more time-sensitive than others; your pediatrician can help clarify which is which.
- Use shared decision-making as it's intended. Come prepared with questions and be honest about your concerns.
- **Avoid all-or-nothing thinking.** Thoughtful timing decisions exist on a spectrum, not just "follow everything" or "reject everything."
- **Revisit decisions as your child grows.** What makes sense at one stage may change later, and that's okay.

Empowerment Comes From Understanding the Tradeoffs

Vaccine timing isn't about doing everything perfectly. It's about understanding tradeoffs (between protection, timing, risk, and peace of mind) and making decisions you can stand behind.

The recommended schedule exists to protect children when they are most vulnerable. But confident parenting also means recognizing your role in the decision-making process, asking good questions, and partnering with a pediatrician you trust.

When parents understand *why* timing matters, they're better equipped to make choices that fit their family — without fear, guilt, or pressure.

Want to begin your research journey? Our [Resources](#) page is a great place to start!

Looking for a place to start your research?

Check out our [Resources Page!](#) It's a great place to begin your journey in becoming a confident, educated advocate in your child's development.

[START YOUR RESEARCH](#)

SHEET PAN SAUSAGE & SPRING VEGETABLES

A ONE-PAN DINNER YOU'LL KEEP COMING BACK TO!

Weeknight dinners should fit in the cross section of healthy and easy — and this one hits that mark. It comes together in under 40 minutes, uses one pan, and is endlessly flexible depending on what looks good at the store.



[DOWNLOAD TO SAVE THIS RECIPE FOR LATER](#)

ENGAGE WITH US

Who is the one person you turn to when you have a question about your child's health — and what makes you trust them?

[LET US KNOW HERE](#)

KEEP IN TOUCH

Follow Advocates for Healthy Kids for quick tips, fun updates, and real talk from fellow parents and our founder, Dr. Dunnavant. Get involved and help us keep our children safe and healthy!



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