

loan that they know is too costly but yet, the banks suck them in anyway. It's a vicious cycle. And it needs to end.

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Childhood vaccination exemptions are illogical, harmful

I recently read that Washington has the highest rate of vaccination exemptions. The impression I received from this article was that we should be proud. I'm not proud.

These vaccines are available because the diseases they prevent are debilitating and deadly. In the 1920s an average of 100,000 cases of diphtheria were reported. Approximately 13,000 people died from it each year. Yet, because of vaccinations there were no reported cases of diphtheria in the United States between 2004 and 2008 (the most recent records, I could easily locate).

Diphtheria was called the "strangling angel of children."

It attacks the respiratory tract, specifically the mucous membranes. It was a leading cause of death among children. Polio is a viral disease that can damage the nervous system and



Guest column

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can even cause paralysis. Hepatitis B affects the liver. Infants are particularly vulnerable to hepatitis B. Since there aren't symptoms it's hard to know until liver damage appears.

Some people fear vaccines because of autism.

The few studies I have glanced at, that suggest this theory, are inconclusive. As parents, we want our children to be healthy and we grasp for any reasoning we can when our children are diagnosed with an illness or disease for which there is no known cause. However, drawing for

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straws and risking a disease that is preventable boggles me.

I have met parents who chose vaccine exemptions. They tell me their kids are doing just fine, they haven't contracted any of these diseases. There's a reason for that. The rest of us are doing our part to keep these diseases at bay by vaccinating

our children.

I don't believe these parents realize that in other parts of the world these diseases occur frequently.

As a matter of fact, in May of this year, there was an outbreak of diphtheria in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. In 2010 there was a polio outbreak in Tajikistan.

If these parents hope their children will grow up and travel the world, they should understand it's best to have them immunized. Otherwise, the kids will grow up and have to get all their shots before travelling. Or take a huge risk.

I think some people have become so concerned over a few inconclusive studies that they've overlooked the bigger picture.

Vaccinations have almost eliminated these diseases in the United States. Diseases that used to leave

children scarred, debilitated or dead.

Granted, not all kids receive the vaccines without some side effects. Then again, people have received side effects from aspirin, toothpaste and herbal remedies. My bottle of Eucalyptus oil (all natural) warns it may irritate skin. Other herbal remedies remind people to be careful as certain herbs can interact with other herbs and cause serious side effects, such as vomiting, heart palpitations and respiratory paralysis.

Nothing we take is 100 percent safe, but if we can continue to keep these horrid diseases at bay through vaccinations, I'm all for it.

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