

Know the Facts

- One in every six women of childbearing age already has blood levels of mercury high enough to cause harm to her unborn children from environmental exposure.
- It is inconsistent and unwise to counsel pregnant women to avoid seafood which contains mercury while recommending vaccines which contain mercury.
- Mercury rapidly crosses the placenta and into the fetus where the fetus actually accumulates mercury at a much higher rate than the mother and typically has blood levels 70% higher than those found in the mother at the time of birth.
- Study after study has provided irrefutable evidence that ethylmercury compounds such as thimerosal enter into the fetal brain and interrupt critical stages of development.
- Techniques such as avoiding those with flu-like illnesses and good hand washing techniques can prevent many cases of the flu.



About SafeMinds

The Coalition for SafeMinds (Sensible Action for Ending Mercury-Induced Neurological Disorders) is a private nonprofit organization founded to investigate and raise awareness of the risks to infants and children of exposure to mercury from medical products, including thimerosal in vaccines.

Since its inception in 2000, SafeMinds has sponsored over one half million dollars in research related specifically to mercury and adverse neurological outcomes, including autism. This level of financial commitment establishes SafeMinds as the largest private non-profit organization funding mercury and autism related research. For more information please visit www.safeminds.org.

SafeMinds

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Flu Vaccines

What You Need to Know



You want to do everything right for your child . . .

You would never knowingly allow someone to inject a neurotoxin into your infant.

Before getting a flu shot, you need to know this:

MERCURY is a neurotoxin.

SafeMinds Alert: Flu Vaccines What You Need to Know



In

March 2001, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) issued a statement warning pregnant women and young children not to eat fish

containing high levels of mercury because it causes neurological problems in children. **Yet, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends that these same women and young children (ages 6 to 24 months) should get flu shots.**

Despite what you may have heard, flu shots **still contain mercury in the form of the preservative thimerosal.** In fact, some flu shots contain more mercury than the EPA recommended safe level for seafood.

SafeMinds is deeply concerned that the risks of mercury-containing flu shots outweigh the benefits for pregnant women, infants and children. Our belief is based on a large-scale scientific study in approximately 50,000 pregnant women and their infants over five flu seasons that found no difference in the risk for developing flu-like illness among those who received the flu vaccine during pregnancy and those who did not receive the vaccine. Reviews in the medical journal *The Lancet* found a lack of health benefit of influenza vaccine for children under 2 and significantly increased rates of adverse events in children given the influenza vaccine.

In addition, a recent NIH-funded study showed that the type of mercury found in flu shots crosses into the brain of infant primates and results in appreciable levels of mercury being trapped in the brain. Mercury is highly toxic to the brain and can interrupt critical stages of brain development.

What Should You Do? If You are Pregnant or Have Small Children . . .

- **Look at the evidence** and decide if you consider the influenza virus a threat to your family.
- If you decide to vaccinate, **demand mercury-free flu shots** for yourself and your children.
- **Do not combine** the flu vaccine with other vaccines.
- If you are not able to get mercury-free flu vaccines, **reconsider your choice.**

What is Thimerosal?

Thimerosal is a mercury-based preservative developed in the 1930s that has been used in as many as 50 vaccines. In the 1982 Federal Register, an expert panel at the FDA reviewed thimerosal and found that it was toxic, caused cell death and called for its removal in over the counter products.

In 1999, the FDA stated that mercury exposure from vaccines exceeded Federal Safety Guidelines. Government officials admitted they were "asleep at the switch" when they failed to add up the cumulative exposure levels when new vaccines were added to the early infant vaccination schedule in the early 1990's.

Thimerosal-Free or Reduced Thimerosal Influenza Vaccines

You can request thimerosal-free vaccines from your healthcare provider. SafeMinds recommends contacting your health care provider well in advance to ask specifically which brand of vaccine the office ordered, and in which formulation.

The following products are available for the 2006-2007 influenza season. Make sure any vaccine you receive is the mercury-free or reduced mercury version:

Fluzone by Sanofi Pasteur: Available in three forms: a 10-dose vial that contains thimerosal; single dose vials without thimerosal; and pre-filled syringes without thimerosal.

Fluvirin by Chiron: Available for ages 4 years and older in two forms: a 10-dose vial that contains thimerosal and a single-dose prefilled syringe that contains reduced amounts.

Fluviral by GlaxoSmithKline (license pending): Only available with full-dose thimerosal.

Fluarix by GlaxoSmithKline: Available for adults 18 years and older with reduced mercury content.

FluMist by MedImmune: Available for ages 5 to 49 in a single-dose nasal sprayer. Contains no thimerosal.