

How Important Are Vaccinations?

Immunization has saved millions of lives in the last 200 years. In 1980, smallpox was declared eradicated. Polio has not been a problem for almost 50 years. These diseases can almost not be found. This means that people live longer, healthier, and better lives. Today, scientists continue to invent vaccinations for deadly illnesses. Some of those illnesses are bacterial (caused by bacteria) and some are viral (caused by viruses). Recently, scientists have developed a vaccine against a virus that can cause cancer in women.

What's the Point?

Scientists have developed many ways to combat some viral and bacterial diseases. Using vaccinations, they have eradicated some disabling and deadly diseases. Smallpox is one of those. Polio, chicken pox, measles, mumps, and rubella have also almost been eradicated. Vaccinations play an important role in maintaining people's health. Vaccinations are usually given to children early in their lives.

Scientists use new technology to see viruses and bacteria and to figure out how those microbes work. Then they are able to invent new ways of stopping them from working. These new scientists "stand on the shoulders of giants" like Edward Jenner. These scientists build on the work of Jenner, who used observations and case studies to figure out that immunization was possible.

