

## Antibiotics and Immunizations

With the school year and flu season approaching, it seems timely to highlight health issues relevant to children. Two topics are currently receiving attention in the media, and from concerned parents: over use of antibiotics and risks associated with immunizations.

Antibiotics should be used only for overwhelming bacterial infections. In infants and children, antibiotics should be avoided. In almost all viral cases, they are of no use and simply insure that another cold, flu, or ear infection will be coming along in a few weeks or months. With ear infections, they almost insure repeated infections, often ending with holes through the eardrums for the placement of tubes.

What do repeated antibiotics and other drug therapies produce? Not what you would hope for and expect. They never strengthen the immune system. They have no effect over viral infections, which make up most of infant and childhood problems. They have massive side effects that often go unnoticed for years. They wreak havoc on the intestines and can permanently damage the enamel of teeth. Because antibiotics destroy good bacteria in the gut and yield an overgrowth of harmful bacteria, the gut lining is compromised. This compromise can cause lasting digestive problems and may cause a child to be at a much higher risk for asthma later on in life.

There are successful treatment alternatives to antibiotics and invasive procedures such as the placement of ear tubes. It is also important to support the body's natural and optimum level of health and resistance to viral and bacterial agents.

The other hot topic is immunizations. There is evidence that some immunizations are a cause of autism. It is not the immunization itself but the preservative, Thimerisol. Thimerisol is biologically active source of mercury. Just as we limit our intake of mercury laden fish, we can limit our children's exposure through immunizations. Thimerisol free immunizations are available.

For more information about keeping your kids healthy throughout the school year and about mercury free immunizations, call St. John's Health Center. 503.286.4400