

# IF WE FORGET HISTORY, WE ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT.



Photo courtesy of March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation

**P**ICTURE FOR A MOMENT  
A 4-YEAR-OLD GIRL WITH  
POLIO THAT HAS INVADED HER  
BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD. THE  
MUSCLES IN HER CHEST, LEGS, OR  
ARMS ARE PARALYZED. A MACHINE  
MUST BREATHE FOR HER.

Now picture an infant who suddenly forms symptoms of a high fever, loss of appetite, and irritability. Within hours, the infant is dead because of H influenza meningitis.

American Academy of Pediatrics  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN



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THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN USED  
TO DIE FROM THESE DISEASES.

Because of vaccines, these and other dreaded childhood diseases are not as common today. Children who are not immunized are not protected from vaccine-preventable diseases. At any time, an unvaccinated child could catch a dangerous or deadly disease.

Even recently, we have seen the effects of not vaccinating. In 1989-1990, 56,622 measles cases were reported, most in children younger than 5 years. During this outbreak, 123 people died from measles-related illnesses—almost half were younger than 5 years. Since 1983, the largest outbreaks of measles have occurred in populations that refuse vaccination.

We cannot allow our nation's strong commitment to the childhood immunization program, including research, to be damaged by inadequate funding (both private and public) or concerns about vaccine safety.

Now is not the time for confusion. The benefits of lifesaving vaccines have greatly reduced unnecessary deaths and disabilities for millions of children. We must all make a commitment to vaccinate our children.

VACCINES PREVENT DISEASES AND  
SAVE LIVES.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician or health care provider. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.