Tuesday, 05 May 2026

Why are vaccines important?

Do Now (page 5)

How do you feel about vaccinations?

Stretch

Why do you think vaccinations might be important?

Big Question

Why are vaccines important?

Ground Rules

Safe Space

- It’s okay to get things wrong.
- You don’t have to contribute if you don’t feel comfortable.
- There is a non-judgemental approach – we challenge the opinion not the person.
- Conversations stay in this classroom – unless adults deem there to be a safeguarding issue.

Show Mutual Respect

- Follow our two ground rules.
- STAR and Track to show respect to the speaker.
- Adhere to the Castle Credo.

Challenge Yourself

- Enjoy the lessons, challenge your perceptions, and learn how to seek further knowledge, understanding and support.

Why are vaccines important?

Vaccination is the most important thing we can do to protect ourselves and our children against ill health. They prevent millions of deaths worldwide every year.

Since vaccines were introduced in the UK, diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people are either gone or are now very rarely seen.

Other diseases like measles and diphtheria have reduced to a very low number of cases each year since vaccines were introduced. These cases are often related to travel.

However, if people stop having vaccines, it's possible for infectious diseases to quickly spread again.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has listed vaccine hesitancy as one of the biggest threats to global health.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines teach your immune system how to create antibodies that protect you from diseases.

It's much safer for your immune system to learn this through vaccination than by catching the diseases and treating them.

Once your immune system knows how to fight a disease, it can often give you lifelong protection.

Herd immunity
Having a vaccine also benefits your whole community through "herd immunity". If enough people are vaccinated, it's harder for the disease to spread to those people who cannot have vaccines. For example, people who are ill or have a weakened immune system.

How do vaccines work?

Most vaccines contain a small amount of bacteria, virus or toxin that's been weakened or destroyed in a laboratory first. Some contain chemicals that make your body think it's coming into contact with the bacteria, virus or toxin.

This means there's a very low risk of healthy people catching a disease from a vaccine. It's also why you might see vaccines being called "live" or "non-live".

Live (weakened) vaccines	**Non-live (destroyed) vaccines**
Contain viruses or bacteria that have been weakened	Contain viruses or bacteria that have been destroyed
Cannot be given to people with a weakened immune system	Can still be given to people with a weakened immune system
Gives long-term protection	Often needs several doses or a booster vaccine for full protection

What do you know so far?

Task (page 5)

Answer these questions in your booklet.

1. What is a vaccine?
2. How do vaccines work?
3. Why are they important?

Stretch: Why might some people not endorse vaccinations?

Why is there an anti-vaccination movement?

An anti-vaxxer is a person who disagrees with vaccinations.

Anti-vaccine stories are often spread online through social media and offline.

Always get your vaccine and health information from trusted sources, such as the NHS or World Health Organisation (WHO).

The vaccine information on social media may not be based on scientific evidence and could put you at risk of a serious illness.

All the current evidence tells us that getting vaccinated is safer than not getting vaccinated.

Why is there an anti-vaccination movement?

- Some people feel that children have too many vaccines.
- Some support certain vaccines but not all.
- Some worry about the ingredients of the vaccine.
- Some worry about the side-effects of a vaccine.

Why is vaccination safe and important?

- They prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide each year.
- Vaccination have almost eliminated some diseases in the UK.
- Herd immunity protects the vulnerable.
- Side effects are mild and don’t last long.

Task

What scientific evidence could you use to help a person who is worried about getting their vaccine?

Prepare your argument on your MWB and be prepared to share it with your partner.

MWB Quiz

1. What is a vaccine?
2. Name **one** disease which has been almost entirely eradicated in the UK due to vaccinations.
3. What does WHO stand for?
4. What is herd immunity?
5. What's the difference between a live and non-live vaccine?
6. How are anti-vaccination stories commonly spread?
7. Give **one** reason a person may choose to not have a vaccine for them or their family.
8. True or false: vaccines prevent up to 1 million deaths worldwide each year.

Further Information

NHS website or your GP
www.nhs.uk

Childline
www.childline.org.uk
0800 1111

You can also:

- Speak to a member of staff at school – your Form Tutor, Head of Year or Key Worker. Any member of staff is here to help!
- Send an email to safe@castle-tmet.uk.
- Speak to an adult that you trust – this might be a sibling, a parent or grandparent. As long as this person is trustworthy then it's a good idea!

How to debate?

Contributing

- Speak Like A Scholar.
- Stand up as you contribute.
- Rebut statements e.g., I acknowledge *Miss Dunn's* point, but I think that…
- Argue for the proposition or opposition.
- This will be a 'hands down' debate.

Chairing the debate

- A scholars will lead the weekly debate and act as the summariser.
- Scholars will then vote for which side they believe won the debate and the chair will declare a winner.

Families should be forced to get their children vaccinated.

Proposition:

- Vaccinations prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide each year.
- Vaccinations have almost eliminated some diseases in the UK.
- Herd immunity protects the vulnerable.
- Side effects are mild and don't last long.

Opposition:

- Children have to have lots of vaccines in their life.
- Herd immunity doesn't require everyone to be vaccinated.
- There are side effects to getting a vaccine.