

Preface

This book is about the vaccines that have been recommended for everyone. Even though we no longer encounter people who have been injured by the infections these vaccines prevent, it is important to understand them because they are all still present and capable of causing harm. My intent is to provide you the information you need to make informed decisions about each of these vaccines. To do that, you need to be able to assess the benefits and the risks of the infections and the vaccines.

To ensure everything you read here is clear, reliable, and understandable, I have had both professional colleagues and groups of parents read the manuscript. I want you to know that all proceeds from the sale of this book are going into a fund to support education about vaccines, I have no financial relationship with any pharmaceutical company, and I am not speaking on behalf of any organization, just myself.

In the first part of this book, I provide the information I think everyone needs to know in order to be able to understand the infections as well as their vaccines, how vaccine decisions are made, and how to evaluate information about vaccines. In the second part of this book, I describe the various illnesses these infections can cause, tell you how each vaccine was developed, list the actual side effects of each vaccine, and explain how each vaccine has altered the occurrence of that infection.

You need to know how likely (or unlikely) it is to be exposed to these infections and what the likelihood of injury would be if infected. Because

an encounter with some of these infections now depends on our neighbors' decisions about vaccines, it has become important to recognize how community immunity (also called herd immunity) affects your likelihood of exposure.

All this is important so that you can balance the benefits and risks of both the infections and the vaccines, which is what making informed decisions about vaccines is all about.