

Should vaccination remain a choice? Your Say Interactive

USA TODAY 11:50 p.m. EST January 29, 2015



(Photo: Damian Dovarganes, AP)

The measles outbreak that started in California's Disneyland has spread to eight states and Mexico, and [this year measles has infected 84 people](/story/news/2015/01/29/measles-outbreak-dangerousness/22521529/). The quick spread of the disease has many wondering about the growing trend of parents opting out of vaccinations for their children.

On this page, reader comments in response to our #tellusatoday questions: Should parents be forced to vaccinate? Should those who don't have to pay a price? The page also contains graphics (if you're on mobile, view those at the full site) that show the national conversation. Informal polls allow you to share your view.

The right to opt out

While most Americans say vaccinations should be required, 37% say parents should be able to opt out of vaccinating their children, according to a 2014 Reason-Rupe Poll.



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Jeremy Beale
@JeremyBeale

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[@USATOpinion](#) [@USATODAY](#) It's a matter of competency if parents know enough to argue their case it is in their [#freedom](#) to choose what's right

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Kenny
@Origer

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[@USATOpinion](#) [@USATODAYhealth](#) not vaccinating your children is selfish and puts others at risk. The vaccine is safer than the virus.

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1

The overwhelming majority of parents in California — one of the few states where students can go to school without being fully vaccinated and the state in which the outbreak originated — seem to be in favor of immunizing their children. About 90% of all kindergartners in the state were current on vaccinations in the 2014-2015 school year, according to an Associated Press report.

Overblown fears

So why the growing movement against it? Nearly 30% of Americans think autism is linked to vaccines, according to a 2012 [YouGov](#) survey. And 10% associate vaccines with cancer (see graphic below for more). A recent USA TODAY editorial blamed [\(/story/opinion/2015/01/27/measles-vaccine-disneyland-herd-immunity-editorials-debates/22435357/\)](#), in part, a small but loud celebrity culture that has been preaching the evils of vaccinations for years: "The outbreak of measles that started at California's Disneyland last month ... demonstrates how misinformation, misguided celebrities and lax state laws can have tragic consequences."

Should parents who don't vaccinate pay a price? USA TODAY Board of Contributors member Alex Berezow thinks they should. [In his recent column \(/story/opinion/2015/01/27/jail-anti-vax-parents-vaccines-cdc-measles-disney-world-california-column/22420771/\)](#), he advocated jailing parents who don't vaccinate. He stated: "As the disease spreads, experts will debate how we respond and what to do about the anti-vaccine movement that's partly to blame for this mess. Likely, all we'll agree on is better outreach to parents. That's not enough. Parents who do not vaccinate their children should go to jail."



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Cydney
@microbiomom

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[@USATOpinion](#) Yes, but criminal law is too harsh a consequence unless involuntary manslaughter comes into question. Fines, perhaps tort law.

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Mary Y.
@IHeartHouse

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[@USATOpinion](#) [@USATODAY](#) [#tellusatoday](#) Yes. I have preemies that can't get shots yet. They put my kids at risk by not vaccinating their kids.

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Misinformed parents, misguided celebrities who tout anti-vaccine practices boost measles comeback. Our view: usat.ly/15SUtio



daniel eugene hirsch
@EugeneHirsch

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[@USATOpinion](#) this is bad, my sister nearly went blind from measles 60 years ago!

10:55 AM - 28 Jan 2015 · Laguna Beach, MO, United States



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Anci 1*
@AnciH1

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[@USATOpinion](#) [@USATODAY](#) there's a risk by taking the vaccin and it's a risk by not taking the vaccin. Parents must get good info before.

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Season
@SeasonO1

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[@USATOpinion](#) [@USATODAY](#) [#tellusatoday](#) don't force, just fine \$\$ parents who don't vaccinate kids. Suddenly parents will change their own mind

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Rocco
@medicroc

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[@USATOpinion](#) [@USATODAY](#) This is a public health threat not a personal issue like homeschooling. Therefore vaccinations should be mandatory

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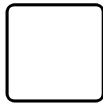


TexasChildren'sPR
@TXChildrensPR

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No vaccine risks "others they come in contact w/...including infants too young to have been vaccinated" [ow.ly/I6Yal](#)
[#tellUSAToday](#)

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USA TODAY Opinion wants to know ...

Should vaccines be mandatory? Should there be consequences to opting out?

View Results

Jail parents who opt out.

It's a choice.

Fine parents who opt out.

Inform parents vs. jail



Make Your Own Poll!

TWEET

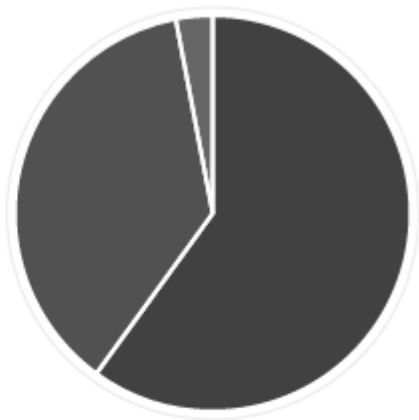
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MOST FAVOR VACCINATIONS

When it comes to childhood diseases like measles, mumps and whooping cough:

- REQUIRE VACCINATIONS
- ALLOW OPT-OUTS
- DON'T KNOW/REFUSED



Reason-Rupe Poll on Oct. 1-6 of 1,004 adults
USA TODAY