



Mandatory Vaccinations

The Health Minister has recently began a push for mandated vaccines in Ireland for school-going children. Where do you stand on this, and should vaccination be a decision for the state, or for parents or guardians to decide?

All the medical evidence is that preventable diseases like measles are causing serious harm and deaths, and it is the children with medical issues who can't be vaccinated who are most at risk.

Vaccination only works if we all work together to ensure near-total coverage in the population. [That would be a vaccination rate of 92-95%]

Labour has not adopted a formal policy response on mandatory vaccination but Labour strongly supports vaccination, and we highlight the evidence from the World Health Organisation (WHO) which shows the safety of vaccines in the face of various concerns that have been raised.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Cases of measles in Ireland went up by 244% between 2017 and 2018.

In 2018, over 41,000 cases and 37 death from measles have been reported in EU countries.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/news/measlesoutbreak.html>

By not vaccinating your child, you run the risk that children with underlying medical issues will be vulnerable to measles infection.

(From the HSE) less common complications of measles are:

- meningitis,
- pneumonia (lung infection), signs of which are fast, difficult breathing, chest pain and deteriorating condition,
- hepatitis (liver infection),
- encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), which can be fatal, so watch for drowsiness, headache and vomiting,
- low platelet count, known medically as thrombocytopenia, which affects the blood's ability to clot,
- bronchitis and croup (infection of the airways), characterised by a hacking or barking cough, and
- squint, if the virus affects the nerves and muscles of the eye.

In 1916, 10% of all deaths every year were children aged 0-14.

Many people died of preventable diseases in Ireland before vaccination:

Cause of death	1916	Cause of death	2014
Total deaths	50,627	Total deaths:	29,095
<i>of which:</i>		<i>of which:</i>	
Measles	218	Measles	0
Scarlet fever	184	Scarlet fever	0
Whooping cough	525	Whooping cough	0
Diphtheria	200	Diphtheria	0
Influenza	712	Influenza	27
Tuberculosis	6,471	Tuberculosis	25
Carcinoma, Sarcoma, Cancer, Malignant Disease	2,679	Malignant neoplasms	8,880
Diabetes	239	Diabetes	474
Meningitis and Encephalitis	446	Meningitis	7
Heart disease	5,373	Heart diseases	5,779
Bronchitis	4,164	Bronchitis	22
Pneumonia	2,544	Pneumonia	965
Accidents of pregnancy and childbirth, puerperal septic diseases	372	Complications of pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium	2
Homicide	24	Homicide	31
Suicide	68	Suicide	459
Execution	4	Execution	0
Other violent deaths	1,520	Other external causes of injury and poisoning	1,070

Source: Registrar-General Annual Report for 1916, Vital Statistics CSO

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-1916/1916irl/bmd/deaths/>