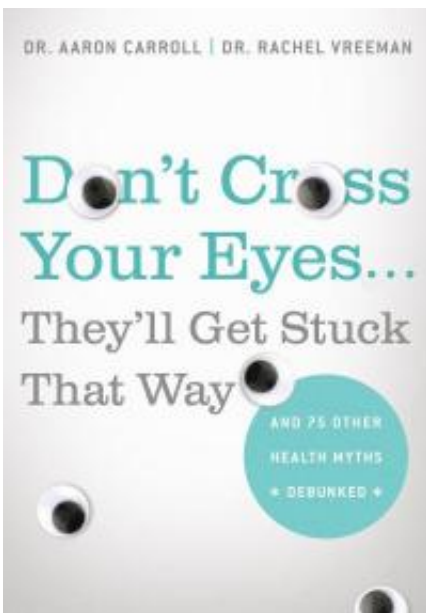


## New book by Indiana University physicians slays health myths we all thought were true

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"Don't Cross Your Eyes...They'll Get Stuck That Way!: And 75 Other Health Myths Debunked" is written by Aaron Carroll, MD and Rachel Vreeman, M.D., of the Indiana University School of Medicine. Credit: St. Martin's

Don't Cross Your Eyes...They'll Get Stuck that Way!, a new book by myth-fighting Indiana University School of Medicine pediatricians Aaron Carroll, M.D., M.S., and Rachel Vreeman, M.D., M.S., debunks the pearls of medical wisdom that many people and even their physicians believe are true. Be prepared to revise your thinking; no, an apple a day won't keep the doctor away and no, warm milk won't help you sleep.

Dr. Carroll, associate professor of pediatrics, and Dr. Vreeman, assistant professor of pediatrics, are physicians and health services researchers on a mission to bring evidence-based medicine to the general public and slay the growing number of health myths that are so prevalent.

"You shouldn't just accept that the toilet seat is the dirtiest place in the bathroom, or that the air on planes can make you sick, or that cell phones cause brain cancer. It's OK to question your physician. Asking why is just as important as asking what," said Dr. Vreeman.

Why do so many myths exist?

"People want to make sense of the world around them; if they read it in the paper or on the internet, or hear it on TV or from their mom or others in authority, they think it must be true. The difference between association and causation is being lost. Just because two things occur at nearly the same time or initially appear related, like vaccines and autism, for example, doesn't mean that one caused the other," said Dr. Carroll.

The pair found that scientific scrutiny shows, for example, that vitamin C does not cure colds or even mitigate [cold symptoms](#); [hydrogen peroxide](#) is not good for wounds and may actually be bad; and air dryers do not keep your hands cleaner than paper towels.

The authors admit that even they believed some myths prior to investigating the science, or lack of science, behind them. Dr. Carroll was convinced that avoiding eggs, known to be high in cholesterol, was good for the heart, but research shows that eggs do not lead to [heart disease](#) in otherwise healthy people. Dr. Vreeman was certain that stretching before running would help her be a better runner. It won't, according to studies. They both thought that uncovering a wound at night would help it heal, but studies show that is not true either.

One myth you don't have to surrender? While it hasn't been studied in rigorous clinical trials of healthy and sick individuals, chicken soup does have properties that make you feel better when you have a [cold](#).

Provided by Indiana University School of Medicine

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