

Web-based social media intervention can positively influence parental vaccine behaviors

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Pregnant women who received vaccine information through an interactive website monitored by a clinical expert were more likely to vaccinate their children than those who did not use the web resource, according to a Kaiser Permanente study published today in the journal *Pediatrics*.

The research finding builds upon a previous *Pediatrics* study (2011) that found 10 to 15 percent of parents chose to delay or refuse one or more vaccines for their children and a Kaiser Permanente study in *JAMA* (2013) that found an increasing number of parents were choosing to delay or refuse one or more vaccines for their children.

This most recent Kaiser Permanente study examined the impact of a web-based intervention on the [vaccination rates](#) of 888 Colorado infants.

"The results of this study suggest websites with interactive components have the potential to complement face-to-face clinical interactions," said Jason Glanz, PhD, lead study author and senior investigator at the Kaiser Permanente Colorado Institute for Health Research. "It's well known that patients use the internet to obtain health care information. Clinicians can combat misinformation by giving patients access to websites that are clinically accurate, engaging and offer ways to communicate with experts and other patients about their concerns."

From 2013 to 2016, Glanz and his colleagues studied 888 [pregnant women](#) in the study. Kaiser Permanente researchers created a website that presented easy-to-understand information on the risks and benefits of vaccination, recommended vaccination schedules, [vaccine](#) ingredients and vaccine laws. In addition to vaccine information, the [interactive website](#) had an expert-moderated blog, discussion forum, chat room and "Ask a Question" portal where parents could ask experts questions about vaccines.

Participants were randomly assigned to three study groups: website with vaccine information and interactive social media components (or VSM); [website](#) with vaccine information (or VI); or usual care only (UC). Infants of study participants were followed from birth to age 200 days to assess vaccination rates for early childhood vaccines. Infants of parents in the VSM arm were about twice as likely to be up-to-date on all recommended infant vaccines than infants in the UC arm. Up-to-date status was not statistically different between VI and UC arms, or between the VSM and VI arms.

According to Glanz, the study's results also have implications for when vaccine information is presented to parents. This type of information is typically offered after birth, during well-child checkups. Because [parents](#) often begin researching vaccinations during pregnancy, the study suggests the [information](#) seems to be effective when presented before a child is born.

Provided by Kaiser Permanente

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