OUR BEST SHOT:
The Truth About Vaccines for You and Your Loved Ones

Vaccines are one of the greatest success stories in modern medicine. Thanks to vaccines, polio no longer exists in the U.S., smallpox has been eliminated globally, and other serious diseases that were commonplace only a generation ago — such as measles, mumps, diphtheria, and tetanus — are becoming increasingly rare.

THEN
Annual U.S. disease cases in the 1900s

(JAMA 2007)

NOW
U.S. disease cases in 2016

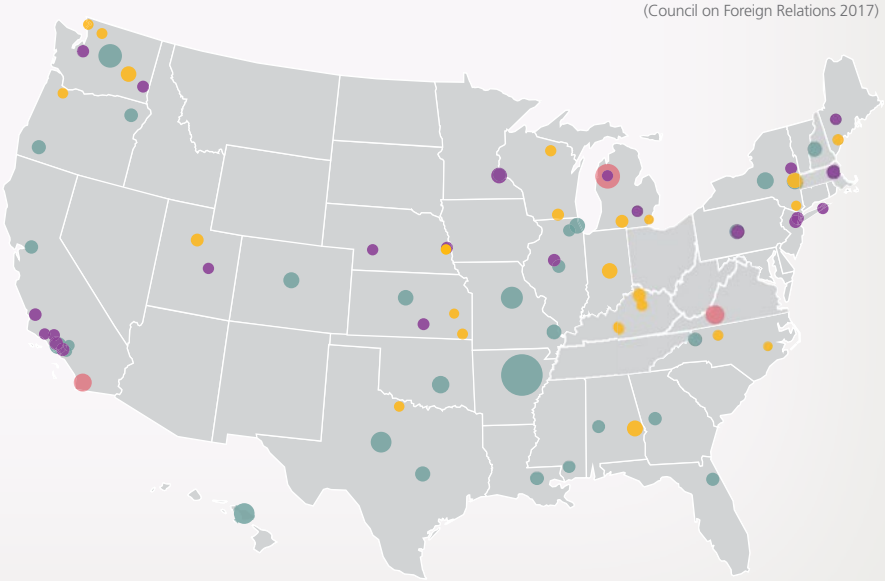
(CDC 2017)

	THEN	NOW
SMALLPOX	29,005	0
MUMPS	162,344	2,039
DIPHTHERIA	21,053	0
RUBELLA	47,745	1
PERTUSSIS	200,752	10,585
HEPATITIS A	117,333	1,222
POLIO (PARALYTIC)	16,316	0
HEPATITIS B	66,232	2,040
MEASLES	530,217	85
PNEUMOCOCCUS	63,067	11,553

When the polio vaccine was introduced in 1955, grateful parents lined-up to get their children vaccinated against the crippling and deadly disease. Additional vaccines made more and more diseases a thing of the past, and we began to forget how serious they could be. Unfortunately, in recent years, misinformation and rumors about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines has been spreading — creating fear and doubt that has had serious consequences.

Vaccine-Preventable Outbreaks in the U.S. in 2017

(Council on Foreign Relations 2017)



measles · mumps · other · whooping cough

*Outbreaks not to scale

How Vaccines Work

Vaccines mimic natural infections — teaching your immune system how to deal with a bacteria or virus, but without causing illness. Vaccines contain a killed, weakened, or partial version of the bacteria or virus they are protecting against. It is extremely rare to get sick from a vaccine so despite what you may have heard, the flu vaccine doesn't cause the flu!

Vaccines Protect Against Serious Diseases that Cause Disability and Death

VACCINES WILL PREVENT AN ESTIMATED

322 MILLION	21 MILLION	732,000
ILLNESSES	HOSPITALIZATIONS	DEATHS

among Americans born 1994-2013, over the course of their lifetimes.

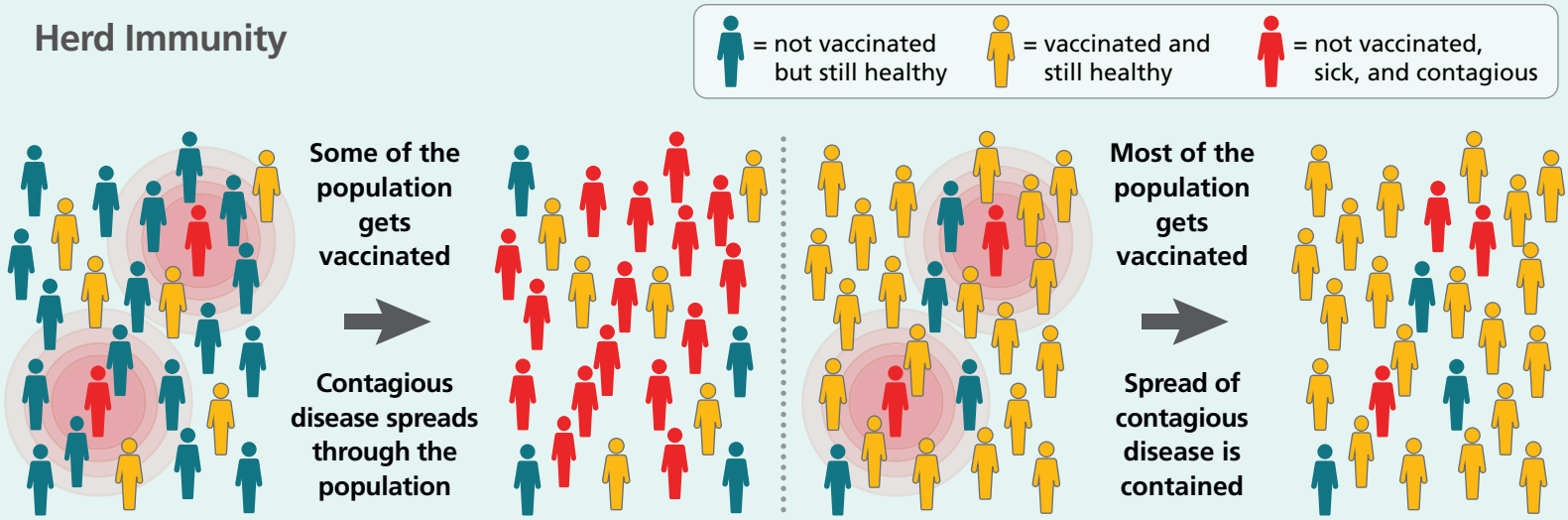
(CDC 2014)

Vaccines Prevent Outbreaks and Save Lives

Getting vaccinated not only keeps you safe, but can also keep your loved ones from getting sick. For example, although older adults don't usually get whooping cough, they can carry the bacteria and expose others. Because infants are too young to be vaccinated against whooping cough, grandparents can help protect their little ones by getting vaccinated themselves and not spreading the disease.

Vaccines also play an important role in the community. People who get vaccinated protect those who are too young, too old, or too sick to be vaccinated themselves. The more people who are vaccinated, the lower the chance that the disease will spread. This is called "community immunity" or "herd immunity."

Herd Immunity



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