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False claims about homeopathic nosodes

What is homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a scientifically unproven system of care. The homeopathic approach is based on the false idea that to treat or relieve symptoms caused by germs, homeopathic products can cause the same symptoms as the illness, and therefore manage or prevent the illness. This is often called “like cures like.” Some alternative (non-medical) healthcare providers make convincing arguments in favour of homeopathy’s effectiveness. Canadians need more knowledge to understand these false and unproven claims.

What is a nosode?

Nosodes are one kind of homeopathic product. They are made from diseased human or animal tissues or discharges. Those germs are diluted many times in plain water, leaving no active ingredients in the product that can affect the immune system. Nosodes are available as sugar pills or as drops in a water/alcohol base. They are sold in health food stores and some pharmacies, and by homeopaths and naturopaths.

Can nosodes prevent diseases, like vaccines which have been safely proven to do so?

No. Nosodes are sold with the claim that they will prevent or build immunity against serious diseases such as pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, diphtheria, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox, meningitis and human papillomavirus. Only vaccines can prevent these diseases, or lessen their severity. There are no high-quality, well-designed studies from any country that prove that nosodes can prevent any disease. Vaccines are made with safe by-products of germs (bacteria or viruses) that undergo years of scientific study and safety testing. They are proven to stimulate the human immune system to create antibodies, which fight infections when the same germs enter the human body.

Why is it important to immunize yourself and your family with vaccines?

Immunity from vaccines protects against life-threatening diseases, and their symptoms and complications. Not all vaccines provide lifelong immunity, so it is important that you get booster doses as recommended. Keeping your vaccinations up to date protects you and others. Infants and the very old, who cannot be vaccinated or do not respond well to vaccines, benefit when others are vaccinated.

Are nosodes alternatives to vaccines for children and adults?

No, because nosodes do not prevent diseases. The Canadian Paediatric Society and Health Canada endorse this proven fact. According to Health Canada, “Nosodes are not and never have been approved by Health Canada to be vaccine alternatives, but have been promoted and used for such purposes by some complementary health care professionals and anti-vaccination advocates. No homeopathic product should be promoted as an alternative to

vaccines because there are no substitutes for vaccines.” (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/regulation/information-homeopathic-products.html>)

Does Canada monitor the safety and effectiveness of nosodes?

No. Health Canada’s Natural and Non-prescription Health Products Directorate only oversees the marketing of natural health products and non-prescription drugs. Unlike for vaccine manufacturers, the Natural Health Products Regulation law does NOT require nosode manufacturers to:

- provide data about the safety, effectiveness and quality of nosodes before or after they are licensed for sale in Canada; or
- undergo continuous testing to monitor their quality, safety and effectiveness.

How do homeopathic and naturopathic organizations recommend that Canadians protect themselves from serious diseases?

Not all organizations have guidelines or a formal statement about their role in counselling the public about vaccines and immunization. The College of Homeopaths of Ontario recommends that homeopaths refer patients to medical practitioners for vaccination and information, because it is not within the scope of their practice. They state that a nosode is not a vaccine, and “...there is no homeopathic remedy which may be considered a substitution for vaccination.” Unfortunately, this view is not upheld by all practitioners. It is your responsibility to learn about nosodes if they are presented to you as substitutes for vaccines.

Where can I get more information about vaccination?

Immunize Canada at immunize.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada at https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/topics/immunization-vaccines.html?_ga=2.132557641.672666225.1503946106-1366577289.1499787989

Canadian Paediatric Society – Caring for Kids at <http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/immunizations-index>

Where can I learn about nosodes and other homeopathic therapies?

Health Canada at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/regulation/information-homeopathic-products.html>

References

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