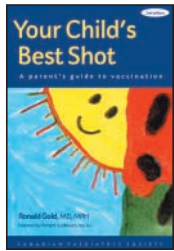


Your child's best shot: a parent's guide to vaccination, 2nd edition

Ronald Gold



Ottawa: Canadian Paediatric Society; 2002. 344 pp. \$19.95
ISBN 0-9682409-6-8
Available in French as: *Les vaccins : Avoir la piqûre pour la santé de votre enfant*. ISBN 0-96824-7-6

Rating: ****

Audience: Parents and caregivers with questions and concerns about modern vaccines.

Content: Introductory chapters include a primer on basic immunology and principles of immunization, as well as a summary of how the safety and effectiveness of vaccines are evaluated in Canada. The book continues with disease-by-disease discussions that provide a historical perspective on the impact and unique clinical aspects of particular diseases. The benefits of immunization for the individual, the family and society are clearly and convincingly presented. Newer vaccines (chicken pox, conjugate pneumococcal and meningococcal) are discussed thoroughly. Particularly appealing is a chapter written in a question-and-answer format to address most, if not all, of the current issues and perceived controversies about vaccines. Brief yet cogent discussions result from questions such as: "Can measles vaccine cause autism?", "What about mercury in vaccines?" and "Don't vaccines wear out the immune system?" Additional resources are provided, as well as vaccine information sheets, which can be reproduced. Written for parents, this book is also intended for busy physicians and primary caregivers to use as ancillary to their discussions with parents about immunization.

Strengths: This is a well-written and informative book, with an appealing cover design and children's drawings throughout. A clear introduction delivers what is promised. In the disease-specific chapters, credible information

is provided, often in the form of statistically accurate and visually convincing tables and graphs. Vaccine histories, side effects and associated risks are discussed in detail. Primary health care providers would do well to have this information at their fingertips.

Limitations: Because the reading level is quite high, some study is required, which may be the intent of the authors. Cost may also be an issue for some.

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This book is available through your local book retailer or through the publisher at www.cps.ca/english/publications/Bookstore/YourChildsBestShotnew.htm

Bioterrorism: guidelines for medical and public health management

Donald A. Henderson, Thomas V. Inglesby, Tara O'Toole, editors



Chicago: American Medical Association; 2002. 256 pp.
US\$29.95 ISBN 1-57947-280-X

Rating: ****

Audience: Medical and public health practitioners.

Content: The beginning of the book includes a series of articles summarizing the clinical cases of anthrax that occurred in the United States in the fall of 2001. It proceeds with separate chapters for each of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Class A agents of bioterrorism (anthrax, smallpox, the plague, botulinum toxin, tularemia and hemorrhagic fever viruses). The focus is on their use as biological weapons. These chapters lead to discussions of consensus statements from the US Working Group on Civilian Biodefence. The topic of large-scale quarantine concludes the book.

Strengths: *Bioterrorism: guidelines for medical and public health management*, written by recognized experts, is concise, direct, reader-friendly and stimulating. The information presented is the product of an evidence-gathering process and expert opinion. By bringing together the most recent information on clinical features, diagnosis, pathogenesis, epidemiology, infection control, decontamination and treatment, it will satisfy both attending physicians and public health practitioners. It is a reasonable book that honestly discusses the difficulties of diagnosis and management. The writers provide ample information without overburdening the reader. Illustrations and tables are used effectively. This excellent book provides readers with an easily accessible wealth of information on bioterrorism.

Limitations: Bioterrorism is an ever-changing topic. The authors are well aware of this and emphasize that "the conclusions and recommendations need to be regularly re-assessed as new information becomes available." Discussions on research needs may be insufficient for researchers, but do sufficiently provide general knowledge, which is likely the intention. A chapter summarizing the non-Class A agents would be useful. The book is written in the American context, and therefore Canadian public health approaches may differ.

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The opinions expressed are those of the reviewer and do not necessarily reflect official Health Canada policy.

This book is available through your local book retailer or through the publisher at www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/article/8183-6790.html

Items reviewed are rated on a 4-star scale (4 = excellent)