

NEWS

911 POLICE COMMUNICATOR OPEN HOUSES SET

The Halton Regional Police Service is hosting two open houses for those interested in a career as a 911 communicator.

These sessions will allow potential applicants to learn of the application process, training involved and essential skills needed for the job.

The sessions are set for Monday, April 15 and Thursday, April 18; both will be held from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at Halton Regional Police Services Headquarters (Community Room) at 2485 North Service Rd. W. in Oakville. Free parking is available.

Space is limited, and those interested are asked to register with Steve Van Dyk at steve.vandyk@haltonpolice.ca.

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OPINION

A LOT OF MISINFORMATION ABOUT VACCINES CIRCULATING

IT MAKES IT TOUGH FOR PARENTS, WRITES NADIA ALAM



NADIA ALAM
Column

A seven-week-old baby nearly died in Brantford from whooping cough. She was one week shy of her first round of immunizations. If enough people had been vaccinated, she likely wouldn't have been sick in the first place.

I firmly believe that parents want to do right by their kids. But there is a lot of misinformation out there. It's clouded the issue and made it tougher for parents to get the information they need about vaccines. Here are some facts:

. Vaccines contain antigens that prime your immune system to recognize

and protect against disease. Some vaccines are a one-shot deal, but many need boosters.

. Vaccines are safer than cars. Decades of research have proven this. The risks of actually catching an illness are higher than the risks from a vaccine.

. Vaccines work by preventing illness in the first place. Catching these illnesses means weeks of being really sick, hospitalization and life-threatening complications.

. Vaccines are not a 100% guarantee and they don't work in everybody. This is why herd immunity matters. Herd immunity is like building a wall to keep illness at bay. Each person who gets vaccinated is another brick in the wall.

. Your immune system can handle multiple vaccines in one visit.

. Missing a vaccine can be fixed by using a catch-up schedule.

Unvaccinated babies and kids are 6-35x more likely to get sick than kids who are immunized. Measles, mumps, whooping cough, influenza and so on are highly contagious diseases that spread like wildfire from person to person. A single case can quickly become an outbreak. Right now, there are measles outbreaks in British Columbia, US, France, Ukraine, Japan, the Philippines and so on. Thousands have been infected and hundreds have died.

These are not mild ill-

nesses. Kids are more vulnerable and can get really sick within hours. Measles can cause pneumonia, encephalopathy (brain inflammation) or serious problems years after the initial infection. Whooping cough can cause hospitalization requiring life support, stroke or death.

Tetanus can cause seizures, brain damage and death. Meningitis can cause pneumonia, heart infections, blood poisoning and death. Even chicken pox can cause deep skin infections, pneumonia,

seizures and encephalopathy. Surviving the initial infection can still expose your child to devastating consequences.

Talk to your doctor about vaccines. Mention your concerns. Get the facts. This is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child.

Nadia Alam is a Georgetown physician and president of the Ontario Medical Association. She can be reached at nadia.alam@oma.org.

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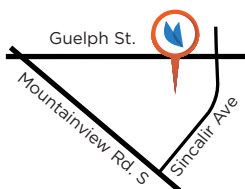
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