

## Would you buy pants from a lighting store?

Do you remember the old TV commercial that asked the question "you wouldn't buy pants from a light store, would you?" The ad was trying to make the point that consumers should go to an expert source that can help them make an informed decision. The commercial ended with a confused man looking down at his pants made of light bulbs. The commercial was funny because it went against common sense. Viewers were left thinking *who in the world would go to a lighting store to buy a pair of pants? That's just silly!*

We are not just consumers of material goods; we are also consumers of information. We gather information to help us make important decisions. When it comes to information about health, it is very important to make sure our sources of information are the experts. Unfortunately, in today's world, anyone can pretend to be an expert. The subject of vaccines is a perfect example - many people without proper training or credentials have claimed to be experts on vaccinations.

It's normal for parents to have questions about vaccines. Gathering information and making informed decisions is part of being a good parent. It's also just as important to make sure you get information from credible expert sources.

To find out if an information source is credible, ask yourself these questions: If it's a website or document, does it say who is responsible for the information? What are the credentials or training of the person giving this information? Is this source of information trying to also sell a product, service, or alternate therapy? Is the information current and is it balanced? Are there scientific experts who can back up the information?

If you are feeling confused by all the websites and people claiming to provide expert information on vaccines you are not alone. Here are a few good sources for balanced and credible information on vaccines.

**Public Health Nurses:** Your local public health nurses understand that you may have questions about vaccines and they want to help. Public health nurses have a wealth of knowledge and welcome your questions. Don't hesitate to give them a call. Visit our website to find a health centre near you [http://www.interiorhealth.ca/FindUs/\\_layouts/FindUs/By.aspx?type=Location](http://www.interiorhealth.ca/FindUs/_layouts/FindUs/By.aspx?type=Location)

**Immunize BC:** (<http://immunizebc.ca/>) The site provides solid, evidence-based information on immunizations plus it has a couple great interactive features to help you get answers to questions. "Chat with a nurse" allows you to login at scheduled chat times, ask questions, and get answers right away. Not a chatter? No problem, use "Ask us" to email a nurse at any time and get an answer to your question with three business days. You can also view previous questions and answers.

**Your Family Doctor:** Always discuss the immunization information you have received from the web and other sources with your doctor or health care professional.

Getting the facts about immunizations is important. Check out these tips to help you evaluate immunization information on the internet.

[http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/immunization\\_information\\_on\\_the\\_internet](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/immunization_information_on_the_internet),  
[http://immunize.ca/uploads/printed-material/imm\\_info\\_internet\\_2012\\_e.pdf](http://immunize.ca/uploads/printed-material/imm_info_internet_2012_e.pdf)

*Authors: Heather Way is an Immunization and Communicable Disease Knowledge Coordinator with Interior Health & Lesley Coates is a Promotion and Prevention Communications Officer with Interior Health, April 16, 2013*

