

## Open Vaccine Discussion with Bill Maher and Dr. Jay Gordon

**Bill Maher:** I thank you for coming on. It's courageous these days just to speak at all about the subject of vaccines.

**Dr. Jay Gordon:** They do take shots at you.

**Maher:** They take shots, yes. [laughter] No, they do. I mean it's one of those things in our culture where there is the one true opinion. But we don't play that game here. So, I know you've had the experience of being on other shows and when you get off the air--this happens here too--you get off the air and somebody goes "Ah, you know, yeah, but you can't say that on TV." Has that happened with you?

**Gordon:** It has...notably it happened some years ago. I was on a show called *The Doctors*, which was enjoyable. I was on with a colleague--a doc I'd known for a long time--and it was a show about a family with seven children, the first four of whom had autism. The next three didn't have autism...and the video of their house was not fun to watch. And she was pregnant with her eighth child. There was a spirited discussion and Dr. Jim Sears, who was a pediatrician on the show--a member of the great Sears family of pediatricians—commented. He said "You know if you were in my practice I wouldn't vaccinate your eighth child" and everybody applauded. And after the show was over I walked out to the parking lot with my friend the other pediatrician, good old friend, and he said to me, "Do you really believe that vaccines cause autism?" I said there's, there's an impact. I can't prove anything so I talked quietly. I said let me ask you a question "do you believe that there's no effect from vaccines on the incidence of autism?" And he said to me, "There might be a very small percentage of children who are adversely affected." I said, "That's all! that's all I'm trying to say!"

**Maher:** But, you can't say it on TV.

**Gordon:** You can't say it on TV, no.

**Maher:** Yeah, this is... this is... We're saying it on TV, yeah. We're just saying, yes we're just, and you know, to call you this crazy person I mean, really, what you're just saying is slower, right?

**Gordon:** Yes.

**Maher:** Maybe less numbers and also take into account individuals...

**Gordon:** Right.

**Maher:** ...people are different. Family history. Stuff like that. I don't think this is crazy.

**Gordon:** I don't think it's crazy either. If you have seven children and four of them have autism you've got to consider the environment.

**Maher:** Look, the autism issue they certainly have studied it a million times, including out of this country...

**Gordon:** Yes.

**Maher:** ...no, I don't trust this country so much because of paychecks--I mean for writing checks to people--but they've just... another guy... they say it's a...and yet there's all these parents who say I had a normal child got the vaccine...this story keeps coming up. It seems to me more realistic to me, if we're just gonna be realistic about it, like it probably happened so rarely but no one wants... you can't say it happens one in a million times because then somebody will think well it's, it's, now I could be that millionth one and you see, you scare people. So, you can't say what might be the more realistic opinion.

**Gordon:** Regarding a lot of conditions and diseases there's a genetic predisposition and an environmental trigger. The National Institute of Health used to have a poster that you could buy it said "genetics loads the gun and environment pulls the trigger." And they were talking about diabetes, they were talking about arthritis and a lot of other conditions. Maybe that's true about autism but again I talk much more quietly because I have no proof.

**Maher:** It may be is the whole my whole point with this is maybe, is that we just don't know so much. this whole situation to me is how you look at it as a patient. As a patient I've caught doctors not knowing what they should know. some doctors keep up with what's happening lately and some stop at medical school I'm told. Have you met doctors who are idiots?  
[laughter]

**Gordon:** I've been accused of the same myself! [laughter]

**Maher:** Okay.

**Gordon:** I've met doctors who I don't think were well enough informed and as you said they just stopped reading and they stopped thinking.

**Maher:** Well okay, exactly. We are at the beginning of understanding how the human body works. You know people say vaccines...of course vaccines work and we applaud them for all the great things they've done. They're a great tool in the medical kit--maybe the greatest but that's the beginning of the debate. I don't understand what they can't get about that. The big... yes...they work. So do antibiotics work, statins work chemotherapy works. I'm concerned with what happens down the road.

**Gordon:** Nothing is free. Nothing that I do right is free. I feel like I should give you a little bit of a discussion before I recommend tylenol because of the impact on the liver. A discussion about ibuprofen before about the impact on the kidneys. And when someone gets antibiotics from

me I talked to them about, you know, there could be a yeast infection you could get diarrhea and the rash--sorry about the diarrhea and the rash—

**Maher:** Right!

**Gordon:** ...but with vaccines, well, the discussion is closed.

**Maher:** That's what I'm saying. I'm not an anti-vaxxer. If I was going to Liberia tomorrow and there was an ebola outbreak I'd get...

**Gordon:** Whatever you could get!

**Maher:** Yes! Of course! You'd give it to yourself...the flu shot. you say well we'll get to the flu we'll get to measles don't worry. But, but, here's the thing...they've been wrong about so much. I object to when doctors, the people in the white coats, are like "Don't ask any questions about this...when have we ever been wrong?" When? Just with me, you drilled mercury into my teeth you put me on accutane which is one of almost a hundred medications that were said safe and effective that had been pulled off the market.

**Gordon:** Black box warnings.

**Maher:** Black box?

**Gordon:** Black box warnings that's what they call it and it's, it's read this before you prescribe or take this medication. You could die.

**Maher:** Right, okay I haven't died but they did a lot I mean I have had misdiagnosis a bacterial infection that was really a fungal infection lots of stuff that this whole idea when were we ever wrong all the time, you don't know one week you tell us this is Time magazine from two years ago surprising news about salt.

**Gordon:** Yes.

**Maher:** All my life I've been told this, a new study found healthy people who reported eating more sodium had no higher blood pressure than those who weigh less. Trans-fats remember? 15 years ago, get that in ya. The *Can't believe it's not butter*, now it's illegal. Turned out to be the worst!

**Gordon:** Well that scandal...some years ago when they were trying to find the, the genesis of heart disease there were two considerations sugar and fat, right? They paid off Harvard Medical School professors 50 grand to lay the blame at the feet of fat.

**Maher:** Right.

**Gordon:** And, for a long time we were told now a high-fat diet makes you fat it's...

**Maher:** The food pyramid was bull\*\*\*\*! [laughter]

**Gordon:** Right.

**Maher:** Four servings of bread... excuse me, I don't think any servings of bread are good! Now people are like, "What are you talking about, Bill?...wholesome wheat. Look it up ! You know these people who were like don't talk about vaccines because you don't know anything...YOU don't know anything!

**Gordon:** We're told that in medical school a third or a half of what you learned this year will probably be wrong five years from now not just a little bit... a hundred and eighty degrees wrong!

**Maher:** All I'm saying is, as, for me I had my childhood vaccines okay I got a flu shot once a long time ago gave me the flu right away. Which is okay, it didn't kill me. But it's not what it's supposed to do.

**Gordon:** Well, that's embarrassing, isn't it? They gave you a shot and you got sick.

**Maher:** I'm just saying, that vaccines like every medicine right have side effects.

**Gordon:** Yes.

**Maher:** Okay and so let's not deny that or pretend it doesn't happen.

**Gordon:** Right.

**Maher:** So, we're just talking about which ones, how much, how do we manage this. This is not crazy talk.

**Gordon:** We don't do it the way that we should do it. Manufacturers don't put... we don't manufacture vaccines as well as we could. We have a schedule that's invariable for every single child, one size doesn't really fit all.

**Maher:** Right.

**Gordon:** The polio vaccine that I would get as a hundred and eighty pound man is the same thing that I give to a 12 pound baby. We could do it a lot better. I don't want to bring...I don't want to bring polio back. I don't want to bring measles back.

**Maher:** Of course not.

**Gordon:** Measles is a nasty illness.

**Maher:** And we had news in the...It's interesting you heard today, just today they found out that measles has something called...

**Gordon:** Amnesia...it causes it causes the immune system to forget a lot of the antibodies...

**Maher:** So, it's actually a harm...a much more harmful disease than we thought.

**Gordon:** It is. It...

**Maher:** Great! New information right we're accepting of new information. Everyone should be!

**Gordon:** It's called learning you learn, you learn...

**Maher:** Right. So okay let me just read you this. This is from the New York Times a year and a half ago. Is this tissue a new organ? Maybe. A conduit for cancer? It seems likely. Let me just read a little bit from the article. "Researchers have made new discoveries about the in between spaces in the human body and some say it's time to rewrite the anatomy books.

**Gordon:** The interstitial they call it...

**Maher:** Right. The fluid filled 3D latticework of collagen and elastin connective tissue that can be found all over the body. They say it's hard to describe. It's a highway of moving fluid a previously unknown feature of human anatomy. So there's this whole new organ in the body we didn't know about a year and a half ago, but you're telling me don't ask questions about "this". This is just so ridiculous and for people who are saying "Whoa Bill, what does that have to do with vaccines?" if you can't figure that out, stop listening. [laughter] I'm just saying we don't know s\*\*\* that's why when doctors--you get a diagnosis, the other doctor gives you another one. They say right away, they get a second opinion. Well, okay. Right away you're telling me it's an opinion and the second one never matches the first. We're guessing. We don't know a lot about how the body works, so how did vaccines fit in with, I don't know, all the new chemicals that have--there's thousands of new chemicals, pollutants, irritants. We didn't used to have all this corn syrup in our bodies. Antibiotics. It could be any combination! So, I'm a little cautious.

**Gordon:** Everybody who writes newspaper columns and people on...pundits on television, ridicule the pharmaceutical industry. The high cost of epinephrine--it is five hundred dollars. Three hundred and eleven thousand dollar medication for children for cystic fibrosis. The fact that we pay ten times more for medications than in other countries. They make fun of the pharmaceutical industry--say they don't trust the pharmaceutical industry, except for this. That's one sacrament that's...and they're... nobody's doing honest reporting about this and it drives me crazy...

**Maher:** Okay

**Gordon:** ...because there aren't two sides to it... it's not pro and anti... there are people in the middle as you mentioned. I give vaccines I get vaccines but I'd like to slow down a little bit and I'd like to talk.

**Maher:** I mean...here... well, we're doing it. oh okay.

**Gordon:** Thank you.

**Maher:** Thank you. The flu vaccine. I would never get one. Here's...now last year it was 47% effective.

**Gordon:** That was a good year.

**Maher:** That was a good year. In 2014 it was 19% effective.

**Gordon:** It was not a good year.[laughter]

**Maher:** '04 it was 10 percent effective, '05 it was 21 percent effective but they don't say well it's not very effective don't take it. That doesn't make people a little skeptical?

**Gordon:** It should make them very skeptical...

**Maher:** Thank you.

**Gordon:** ...and there are experts who, who have studied this who said, "Look we have to stop telling people that we have a great flu shot because it keeps venture-capital out of the arena we could eventually have a great flu shot." And one of the more interesting scandals involved the flu mist, the nasal flu vaccine. We promoted that vaccine heavily because there's no needle. It was found that for two years that shot had zero effectiveness. Zero efficacy. They pulled it off the market last year and they put it back on the market this year, kind of we'll see. So there were doctors wandering around the newborn intensive care unit who thought that they had immunity to influenza and they had nothing.

**Maher:** We don't...it's arrogant. You know, I read recently they don't know how anesthesia works. They know that it works, they don't know why.

**Gordon:** Right, [laughter] exactly. [laughter]

**Maher:** But I should just shut up about all the...it's...

**Gordon:** Anesthesia in childhood is it is a very controversial topic because it's not good for you to be knocked out. So, I've done reading to find out why does general anesthesia work. We don't know! If we speculate, they say perhaps it destroys fat in the braincells. We don't know.

**Maher:** Right.

**Gordon:** That's strange.

**Maher:** You know when someone comes to me and they say you know I went to the doctor today I have cancer and they know exactly what caused it and they know exactly how to cure it then I'll say okay I'll shut up about asking questions about anything else medical. Until then I'm not going to shut up and you shouldn't either. Thank you so much. [Applause]