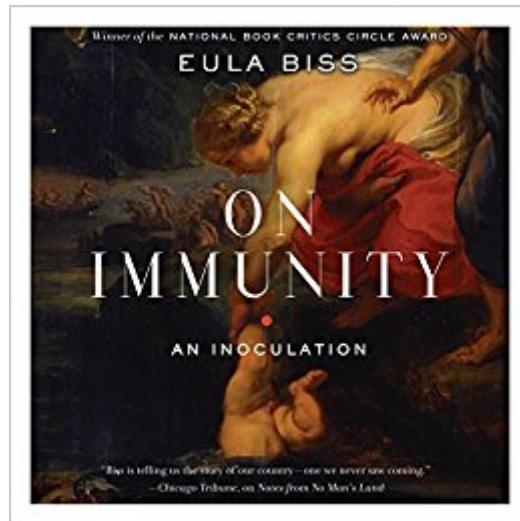


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# On Immunity



## Synopsis

Upon becoming a new mother, Eula Biss addresses a chronic condition of fear-fear of the government, the medical establishment, and what is in your child's air, food, mattress, medicine, and vaccines. She finds that you cannot immunize your child, or yourself, from the world. In this bold, fascinating book, Biss investigates the metaphors and myths surrounding our conception of immunity and its implications for the individual and the social body. As she hears more and more fears about vaccines, Biss researches what they mean for her own child, her immediate community, America, and the world, both historically and in the present moment. She extends a conversation with other mothers to meditations on Voltaire's *Candide*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Susan Sontag's *AIDS and Its Metaphors*, and beyond. *On Immunity* is a moving account of how we are all interconnected-our bodies and our fates.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Biss advocates eloquently for childhood immunization, making her case as an anxious new mother intent on protecting her son - and understanding the consequences. Her exploration is both historical and emotional... Biss frankly and optimistically looks at our 'unkempt' world and our shared mission to protect one another." - Publishers Weekly, starred review "A thoughtful, withering critique [of] more recent fears of vaccines... [Biss] accommodates the many sides of the topic but arrives at a clear point of view: Vaccinate." - Kirkus, starred review "[A] far-reaching and unusual investigation into immunity... Artfully mixing motherhood, myth, maladies, and metaphors into her presentation, Biss transcends medical science and trepidation." - Booklist, starred review "As Eula Biss makes

clear in this well-written journey through history, medicine, and her own experience as a mother, one parent's decision to vaccinate a child comes from the same source as another parent's not to. We are all afraid. Biss is a candid, original, and unfailingly smart guide through these thorny thickets." - Anne Fadiman "Imagine Eula Biss as herself a vaccine against vague and incoherent thinking, as a booster to the acuity of your thought, as a thermometer taking the temperature of our ideas about purity, contagion, individuality, and community. This book is a magnificent piece of research and of writing... And it has vampires in it." - Rebecca Solnit "I can't think of an American writer at work today who matches Eula Biss's combination of lyrical precision, exhaustive research, timely provocation, and fiercely examined conscience. Like so many great nonfiction classics, *On Immunity* will teach, provoke, chafe, inspire, haunt, and likely change its many readers. Its central, difficult, and ecstatic premise - that 'we owe each other our bodies' - couldn't be more urgent, as the question of how we contend with this interdependence, this collectivity, is fundamental to our human present and future." - Maggie Nelson "Eula Biss accomplishes two remarkable things in this book. She efficiently dismantles the wall between self-documentation and world-documentation. And she synthesizes a vast amount of information into the haunting and inescapable conclusion that 'We are ... continuous with everything here on earth. Including, and especially, each other.'" - Sarah Manguso "The inexplicableness of our human minds has led us to move forward and backward and sometimes in circles, but once in a while a clear voice puts a momentary stop to that muddled movement - - not to interfere but to allow a pause for us to question, to reexamine the familiar, and to demystify the common belief. Eula Biss gives us that voice in this audacious book, and offers a thorough understanding of one of the most important experiences that we all share - - vaccination."

-Yiyun Li --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Coming soon...Coming soon...

Written as though a poet, sociologist, historian, and immunologist collaborated to produce the truth -- physical and political -- of immunization and vaccination. Informative, often counterintuitive, and insightful.

This isn't a history of vaccines. it isn't even a scientific discussion of the pros and cons of vaccinating your kids. What is it, then? It's one persons reflections on their journey through the process of getting a kid their shots. Biss is more sympathetic to people who decide to skip immunizing their kids than some would like, but she does cover the negative side of that decision.

It's well written and an easy read. I can't give it 5 stars, because Biss could have given us a broader perspective on the history and science of vaccines than she did. Instead, she spends time reflecting on the burdens of 21st century parenting. So she should, but the percentage devoted to this is too high. Perhaps my expectations were the problem. It seems everyone had this as a top ten book of the year. It was a good book, I'm glad I read it, I don't feel cheated and I would recommend it to you. But - it's not great. Very good. Not top ten great.

A good read, giving insight to our fears and feelings about immunization, the risk and social benefits compared. It does not force a conclusion but causes the reader to explore their own values, while providing history and knowledge to reach a decision.

A little lengthy with her discussion of her journey. But good background info and the decision to immunize is up to each family but the responsibility not to carries a lot of weight that affects us all!!!

Awesome!!

Well written, well researched, timely and engaging dialogue. Seriously, Eula Biss can write. She weaves in bits of mythology, autobiography, science and social science reporting. It's a well-crafted and engaging read. Highly recommended!

A well-written mix of the personal and the empirical. She presents an even-handed discussion of a complicated, and often contentious, topic and does so in a manner that is interesting to read.

Needed to read it for my microbiology class, but ended up liking it! Interesting read--Eula draws from her own experiences and passions to make a clear argument. It's an easy read too.

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