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Bill Gates: My 'best investment' turned \$10 billion into \$200 billion worth of economic benefit

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Matthew J. Belvedere
@MATT_BELVEDERE

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KEY POINTS

Investing in global health organizations aimed at increasing access to vaccines creates a 20-to-1 return, the Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist says.

Putting \$10 billion into the S&P 500 would have grown only to \$17 billion over 18 years, factoring in reinvested dividends, Gates tells CNBC in Davos.



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Bill Gates and the return on investment in vaccinations

Investing in global health organizations aimed at increasing access to vaccines created a 20-to-1 return in economic benefit, billionaire [Microsoft](#) co-founder and philanthropist [Bill Gates](#) told CNBC on Wednesday.

Over the past two decades, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has donated “a bit more than \$10 billion” into mainly three groups: the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

“We feel there’s been over a 20-to-1 return,” yielding \$200 billion over those 20 or so years, Gates told CNBC’s [Becky Quick](#) on “[Squawk Box](#)” from the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. “Helping young children live, get the right nutrition, contribute to their countries — that has a payback that goes beyond any typical financial return.”

As a comparison, [Gates echoed](#) what he wrote in an essay in The Wall Street Journal last week under the banner “The Best Investment I’ve Ever Made,” saying that same \$10 billion put into the would have grown only to \$17 billion over 18 years, factoring in reinvested dividends.

On vaccines, Gates also had a message for parents who fear side effects as a reason not to get their kids their shots. “It is wild that just because you get misinformation, thinking you’re protecting your kid, you’re actually putting your kid at risk, as well as all the other kids around them.”



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by a vaccine, Gates warned against complacency.

“As you get a disease down to small numbers, people forget. So they back off. They think, ‘Gosh, I heard from rumor. Maybe I’ll just avoid doing it,’” he said. “As you accumulate more and more people saying that for whatever reason, eventually measles does show up. Kids get sick. And sometimes they die.”

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