

# Vaccine Inserts & the Myth of the DTaP Cry

By Lydia Greene, Back to the Vax

The myth about DTaP cry refers to the belief that the DTaP shot causes swelling in a baby's brain, referred to as encephalitis, that in turn causes the baby to cry in a certain pitch that is referred to as the "DTaP cry." Using the possible side effects listed on vaccine inserts is very prevalent in anti-vax circles to cause fear and convince new parents that something went wrong during their child's first vaccinations. I am not arguing that vaccines are risk-free or symptom-free, but that they are low-risk. The benefits of vaccination far outweigh any risk of side effects. The benefits of vaccination not only protect your children, but your grandparents and your grandchildren.

You likely exist today because you or someone in your lineage had access to one of two things: vaccines and antibiotics.

We take calculated risks every day. We drive cars, we let our kids play at the park, we compete in contact sports, and we attempt DIY home projects. These things can have disastrous outcomes and yet we do them often.



The risk of vaccines is far less, and yet some of us pause because stories are powerful, despite being the lowest form of evidence. In Vaccine Adverse Events: Separating Myth From Reality, the research shows disease is far riskier than the vaccine itself (Spencer et al. 2017). For example, encephalitis occurs in 1 in 1000 cases and the vaccine has a 1 in a million risk. It is much safer to be vaccinated considering that the MMR vaccine is very effective in preventing measles.

When I brought my daughter for her 8-week vaccines, I was filled with hesitancy and fear. I had this idea that once we gave her vaccines, we could not undo it. What if something went wrong? At this point, I was overcoming breastfeeding issues, and this natural parenting forum helped me so much, where my own doctor didn't give me support. I may have heard some anti-vax myths at that point, but I had a background in science and still planned to vaccinate her. When I brought her home later that night, she started crying and wouldn't stop. It was impossible to nurse her, and in between, she would sleep so deeply that it scared me. Looking back, of course, she slept deeply because crying likely exhausted her. The nurse I called dismissed my concerns and said it was normal. When I went to my newfound, "natural" parenting community, they were quick to point out that my daughter's reaction was serious.

"I should just read the vaccine inserts, and I would know what happened."

So that's what I did, and sure enough, it says that right in the insert. Here is an excerpt from the INFANRIX DTaP insert.

#### **5.4 Adverse Reactions following Prior Pertussis Vaccination**

*If any of the following reactions occur in temporal relation to receipt of a pertussis-containing vaccine, the decision to give any pertussis-containing vaccine, including INFANRIX, should be based on careful consideration of the potential benefits and possible risks:*

- *Temperature of 40.5 C (105 F) within 48 hours not due to another identifiable cause;*
- *Collapse or shock-like state (hypotonic-hyporesponsive episode) within 48 hours;*
- *Persistent, inconsolable crying lasting 3 hours, occurring within 48 hours;*
- *Seizures with or without fever occurring within 3 days.*

So while it did give me what I thought was a reason to never allow a DTaP vaccine in my daughter ever again, I didn't even listen to the insert and talk to my doctor about what had happened. When I saw "Nervous System Disorders- Encephalopathy, headache, hypotonia, syncope" in the Post Market Experience Section, I completely ignored that it also said, "Because these reactions are reported voluntarily from a population of uncertain size, it is not always possible to reliably estimate their frequency or establish a causal relationship to vaccination."

### **WHAT EXACTLY IS A VACCINE INSERT?**

It is a legal document. All pharmaceutical products have a package insert - a pamphlet with legal details - and vaccines are no different. They must list all possible risks and post-market adverse events, so when a doctor goes against the insert, the manufacturer is not responsible. Just because something was reported as an adverse event, doesn't mean it was caused by the vaccine. In the Gardasil HPV vaccine insert there are gunshot wounds and automobile accidents listed in the adverse events. Why? Because they track all negative events after vaccination during the studies, even if they have nothing to do with the vaccine. This should actually make you feel better about the process because NOTHING is hidden. They are being transparent. In the pediatric COVID-19 vaccine trials, a swallowed coin is in the adverse events. Did the vaccine cause a child to swallow a coin? Of course not.

*So what happened to my daughter? Why was she so distraught? Why the screaming, poor feeding, and deep sleeping? Was her brain actually inflamed?*

**Nope.**

In catching up on my own vaccinations, I also got a Tdap. IT HURT. My arm hurt every time I moved it.

## Vaccines for Adults



**Learn about recommended vaccines for adults.**

Now picture an 8-week-old baby's leg. My daughter was only 8 lbs or so at her 8-week check-up. Her legs were tiny. The likely explanation is pain - a localized pain reaction. Studies show children fully recover from such reactions (Blumberg et al. 1988, 1993). They also show it is unlikely to happen again (O'Leary & Maldonado 2017). My daughter was back to herself on the third day after her shot.

Just like this insert says, this is why it is so important to discuss with your doctor and not just assume something like encephalopathy happened. There are many more symptoms of encephalitis than just what my daughter went through. My daughter had none of the other symptoms. While the thought of encephalitis is scary, it is also important to note that many of the diseases we vaccinate for can cause encephalitis at a much higher rate than any vaccine. The vaccine is statistically much safer than the disease.

Today, my daughter, along with my other two children, are fully caught up on their vaccinations, including DTaP. Outside having some minor side effects, they all tolerated their vaccines just fine. Don't allow these stories to sway you.

## Vaccines for Adolescents

**Learn about recommended vaccines for adolescents.**



*Find resources and references*



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