

# Vaccines and Autoimmunity

By Lydia Greene, Back to the Vax

I have had severe fistulating Crohn's disease since I was a teenager. It is an autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks the digestive tract and creates ulcerations and fistulas. It's been over 20 years with this disease, with many ups and downs. Having had surgery, I am now missing about a third of my colon. I have had a temporary colostomy and almost died from sepsis. When I say I would do anything to prevent my children from going through what I went through, you know I mean it. Having a life-threatening, chronic condition is what made the "crunchy lifestyle" so appealing to me when I held my anti-vax beliefs. It gave me a sense of control. If I just did everything perfectly I could prevent my kids from suffering as I did. So when I came across a tiny scientific article on Autoimmune/Inflammatory Syndrome Induced by Adjuvants (ASIA), it stopped me in my tracks. It implies that vaccine adjuvants can trigger autoimmune disease. Not vaccinating seemed like a way I could lower my children's risk of developing autoimmune disease. It gave me a point of control.



## IS AUTOIMUNE/INFLAMMATORY SYNDROME INDUCED BY ADJUVANTS?

An entity that incorporates diverse autoimmune conditions induced by the exposure to various adjuvants. Adjuvants are agents that entail the capability to induce immune reactions.

When changing my mind on vaccination, this was one of my biggest hesitations. I had to read and ask the scientific community so many questions in order to feel confident that vaccinating was the right choice. When I read a much larger study that showed that viral and bacterial infections (that we currently vaccinate against) can trigger autoimmunity, it allowed me to reconsider my stance against vaccines.



**Viral and bacterial infections can trigger autoimmunity.** Nobody ever talked about that in my anti-vax forum. I had no clue, because I was stuck in an echo chamber that reinforced my belief that *vaccines* cause autoimmunity. For instance, there seems to be a causative factor between people who have had the Epstein-Barr virus and getting multiple sclerosis later in life (Soldan and Lieberman 2022). As a result, a new vaccine is being developed, and we will be able to see the results over time, just like we now know that the HPV vaccine, Gardasil, prevents cervical cancer. There are also correlations between rotavirus, influenza, measles, mumps, and rubella infections with autoimmunity (Smatti et al 2019). Bacterial infections can also trigger autoimmune disease and this is an extra benefit of vaccinating against Hib, tetanus, diphtheria, pneumococcal and meningococcal bacteria as well (Kim et al. 2014).

As for that tiny ASIA study that scared me, two much larger data sets showed there is no correlation between aluminum adjuvants and autoimmune disease (Ameratunga et al. 2017). The authors concluded that current studies do not support the existence of ASIA. Most experts consider the ASIA hypothesis a myth and there isn't science that supports it. I now understand that vaccinating my children protects them against disease and also has the potential to reduce the risk of autoimmune disease by protecting them against those illnesses. For what it's worth, I caught up all 3 of my children on an accelerated vaccination schedule and none of them are autoimmune a year later, despite their extra genetic risk from being my kids. I feel reassured that I made the right decision after reading a recent study that the MMR vaccine actually reduces the risk of inflammatory bowel diseases later in life.

## Learn more about HPV and vaccination

IKC's HPV  
Toolkit



Find resources and references



Reviewed by: Vincent Iannelli, M.D., Pediatrician, and  
Founder of Vaxopedia.org

