

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice Chair Linthicum and members of the committee

My name is Jessa Reinhardt. My daughter was diagnosed with Food Protein Induced Enterocolitis Syndrome, also known as FPIES, at 3 weeks old. FPIES is a severe allergy that affects the GI system and leads to severe vomiting, diarrhea, and shock. Her reactions were so severe, she even reacted to proteins in my breast milk from food I consumed. The pediatrician we had at the time was less than helpful on navigating through the array of challenges we faced, as most Pediatricians, Allergists, and Gastroenterologist are not trained on FPIES.

I began my research, like most moms do. I found support groups, started reading labels, charting symptoms while spending my maternity leave caring for a child who was screaming in pain from everything she consumed, trying anything I could to make her feel better. I started noticing patterns to her reactions and began removing trigger foods from my diet and began to see improvements in her health. I read the ingredient list to every product I consumed including toothpaste, laundry soap, and dish soap. The list of ingredients she reacted to grew longer and longer but the more I removed from our home, the healthier and healthier she became.

During her two-month appointment, it was time to discuss vaccines. I informed her doctor of my hesitation to vaccinate due to her severe reactions and the fact we still did not know all of her triggers. Her doctor assured me there was no risk in vaccinating her, that the vaccines would not worsen her condition. How could that be? At 2 months, the oral Rotavirus vaccine is given. The Vaccine Information Pages state "Some babies should not get this vaccine... A baby who has a severe allergy to any part of the rotavirus vaccine should not get vaccinated." How do we know if she is allergic to any part of the vaccine, I was given no ingredient list. The ingredients are listed on the Vaccine Insert however. It is there I saw Xanthan listed (which is derived from Corn, Soy, or Wheat) all ingredients that caused bloody diarrhea and vomiting when exposed through my breastmilk and in which a more severe reaction would occur if she was given those proteins directly. Our situation is not unique, 1 in 13 children have allergies. Not having access to ingredient lists can lead to children suffering serious allergic reactions or delaying all vaccines, not just the ones they are allergic to.

As parents, we research everything. We research, we research the safety ratings on car seats, we research food labels, we research medications. Vaccines should not be exempt from this. As parents, we should have access to the same information about vaccines as we do Tylenol. Our children deserve for us to make truly informed decisions on all aspects of their health. I fully support SB 649.

Thank you- Jessa Reinhardt