

In January of 2013, my then fully vaccinated for his age 15 month old, rambunctiously ran down the hallway to the office of our amazing pediatrician of 10+years. A man I trusted with the safety and well-being of my children, who again, were fully vaccinated when we entered his office. In fact, we were there for a vaccine.

It was “normal” it was “routine” and I was well versed on the “minor” side effects that could potentially occur. What I didn’t realize was that the pamphlet handed out in a pediatrician’s office is not all encompassing of the potential side effects. I believed those pamphlets to be a full disclosure as to what I was signing up for and I believed it for more than a decade. What I know now was that this was not informed consent, it was illusive consent.

I held my little guy in my lap as the vaccine was administered. They kept us longer since he had shown some allergy symptoms to eggs, which were part of this live vaccine. Once no signs of allergy were observed, we were free to leave. I carried my little boy out of the office and we returned home. He took a nap at his typical nap time but when he woke up, about 3 hours following the time he received the vaccine, he couldn’t stand. At first I thought he was just sleepy or not feeling well which would be typical per that illusive pamphlet I had all but memorized. He repeatedly tried to walk and when he eventually fell into the wall, I called the advice nurse. She sent us to the ER.

My little boy who went joyfully running into his Dr’s office hours prior, suddenly had no reflexes in his legs. The first doctor, and another, and a nurse, and a student were sent in repeatedly trying to draw out the slightest reactions to their reflex tests. Nothing happened. He tested negative for guillain barre and they sent us home with an abundance of caution.

It was nearly two weeks before he could walk again. Two weeks before he could even stand without immediately falling. During that time and for the past 6 years I have spent countless hours researching each individual ingredient and the effects on our individual nervous systems. I do not force my decision to stop vaccinating upon anyone. I don’t expect that others who have not witnessed a vaccine injury will understand something I also didn’t understand. However, I do expect that our physicians are required to provide patients with a full disclosure, rather than a tidy snapshot of what amounts to a minor cold as the likely side effects. Though this may be the likely set of side effects, all patients deserve to be fully informed of the unlikely side effects, so that they too can make informed decisions regarding medical care for their children. This remains true even if a parent decides that vaccines are not worth the permanent risk when compared to preventing viruses that we are medically equipped to handle in this country.

The American Medical Association requires that physicians provide patients with informed consent to disease treatment and prevention. If after being informed, a patient declines treatment or prevention, it is unlawful to force that person to comply by way of fear of exclusion from constitutionally allowed freedoms in this country, including education and the right to occupy public and private places. The State of Oregon has a duty to do what is lawful regarding informed consent, not what is preferred by a population who may or may not be properly informed.

The recent measles outbreak is not alarming to those who have made a choice based on informed consent to delay or deny vaccines. We use this outbreak as an opportunity to demonstrate why we would prefer a rash and a few weeks home from school over the temporary and even permanent ailment(s) our children have experienced following one or more vaccines. The freedoms of this country must continue to provide a safe place to simply say “no” to something that has potential to cause harm.

Oregon does not have the right to remove informed consent and on behalf of my vaccine injured son, I respectfully ask that Oregon continue to allow parents to make informed consent decisions regarding the medical care of our children.

Thanks,  
Stephanie Gittings