

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding all opinions on the removal of vaccine exemptions in Oregon. I am writing today because your decision will directly affect my family and families in a similar situation.

My husband's family has a history of autoimmune diseases. My husband has psoriasis and iritis, and his brother has psoriasis along with Tourettes Syndrome (according to the Tourette's foundation is linked to autoimmune). We have two sons ages 4 and almost 2. Our 4 year old has always had bad reactions to vaccines. He gets high fevers, rashes, and with the MMR vaccine had a 105 degree fever and scary hallucinations for several hours in the middle of the night. We were terrified he was going to seizure and it was excruciating as a parent to watch our child writhing in pain and fear. His behavior changes drastically after receiving vaccines for several weeks and he has nightmares that are awful. I do not wish any illness on any child or family and I am still glad he received the MMR, but I am thankful to have the choice on when he will receive the second dose based on Oregon's laws.

Our initial plan was to get all of the vaccines on schedule, but after his first few reactions we decided to spread them out. We previously lived in California, so we knew we had to document everything in order to get an exemption. Through Kaiser, it took us 3 pediatrician changes to find a doctor willing to listen to our concerns. (It's important to understand we couldn't even get doctors to listen to us and many didn't know the answers to our questions!) Finally, one doctor gave us a referral to work with Kaiser's lead vaccine researcher who immediately agreed we were right to push for better care based on our son's experience.

The researcher put together a vaccine schedule for us to follow, so our son could still receive vaccines, but they would be spaced out further for his safety. Even with this schedule we've seen reactions, but we feel more comfortable with this route because we can isolate reactions and there is less to override his system at once. Our youngest son doesn't seem to have the same reactions, so we've allowed him to increase his vaccine frequency, so he is more on track with the recommended schedule. People's bodies are different and there is no one size fits all especially in medicine.

There is not enough science behind vaccines for people with autoimmune diseases to safely force all children on the current schedule. If you have a medical history of autoimmune in your family many doctors don't consider that enough to provide a medical exemption, yet several of the brochures encourage you to consult with your doctor if you have a compromised immune system due to medical studies and reactions recorded. The catch is that it is very difficult to diagnose a child with an autoimmune diseases until they are older.

My next concern is that some vaccines have 92-97% efficacy without the last shot, but additional doses have been added sometimes against the recommendation. For example the Cleveland Clinic medical journal points out that only 2 doses of Hep B are needed, yet we still give 3 out as a requirement. <https://www.mdedge.com/ccjm/article/96083/adolescent-medicine/do-patients-who-received-only-two-doses-hepatitis-b-vaccine>

It's the same for HIB, and pneumococcal, yet we encourage additional doses. I can understand the desire to make certain vaccines mandatory, but different people are at risk for different health concerns. Our son is at a much greater risk for complications to his immune system breaking down than he is for contracting Hep B, yet there are other families who are at a much greater risk for contracting Hep B and have no immune vulnerabilities. I realize some people are comfortable with the current vaccine

schedule, but what happens when another vaccine is added with multiple shots, and then another, and perhaps another? What happens when the last vaccine is something you're uncomfortable with, but now we've lost the ability to choose for ourselves?

I strongly believe in vaccines and their protection of our community, but I do not believe in forcing the decision for the individual, nor taking choice away from parents. It would be a better use of our resources (time, money, and energy) to EDUCATE people rather than trying to force people to cooperate through legislation. We can do BETTER. Let's give people the freedom to learn, not through fear, but through science and the commitment to health.

Thank you for your time. I hope with all my heart Oregon maintains freedom of choice for all.

All the best,
Amira and Ryan Schultz
Portland, Oregon

<https://www.opb.org/news/article/measles-vaccine-pediatrician-interview/>