

Flu Vaccine Deaths: Just How Rare Are They? Learn How to Find Out for Yourself.

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A few days ago I wrote a post about the death of Kaylynne Matten, the seven-year-old Vermont girl who died suddenly four days after receiving her annual flu vaccine. Kaylynne's parents believe her death was related to the vaccine and they are still awaiting news from the investigation being conducted by the Vermont State Medical Examiner. As they wait in limbo, Kaylynne's grieving parents did what many other grieving parents have done; [they shared her last photos with the public.](#) This is not a "desperate grab for attention." This is what parents often do when their child is suddenly taken from them and they can't make sense of the death. It's what some parents have chosen to do here on Vaxtruth. We started our "[Meet the Children,](#)" feature so that parents of vaccine-injured children would have a place to tell their stories. The goals of the Meet the Children page are: 1) Give parents an opportunity to tell their stories, 2) Validate parents experiences by letting them know that they are not alone in what happened, and 3) Educate other parents about the real dangers of vaccines and what can happen when you follow the CDC's Childhood Schedule as if it is safe for 100% of the population.

We believe it is absolutely necessary for the stories of these children to be told, and for every parent to understand what can happen. Every parent needs to know that serious and even fatal vaccine-reactions do occur. No matter how rare they are they do happen, and as Barbara Loe Fisher stated in her 1996 address to the Institute of Medicine Vaccine Safety Forum:

"You cannot be in the presence of a profoundly vaccine damaged child and not know that child could be your own. And you cannot try to comfort a mother who has just buried a baby who has died from a vaccine ... and not know that you could be the one standing over the grave. When it happens to your child, the risks are 100 percent.

While Kaylynne Matten's parents await the official determination of death, Dr. Harry Chen (Vermont's State Health Commissioner) is scrambling to reassure frightened parents that Kaylynne's death has not been ruled as a vaccine-injury. Dr. Chen cautions the public not to become "alarmed." He reassures us that the death of this healthy, vibrant 7 year-old could just be "coincidence." Many of the parents I know whose children have suffered fatal or near-fatal vaccine-reactions were also told that their child's death or injury was "coincidence." We've been told this because officials who investigate these serious adverse events continue to repeat the mantra: "**Vaccine reactions are extremely rare**". The implication is that since vaccine-reactions are "so rare," you don't have to be concerned because it could never happen to your child.

Just how rare are serious vaccine-reactions? How can we find out?

One way is to look at [the stories of the children](#) here on Vaxtruth's website, and remember that Vaxtruth has only been in existence since August of 2011. Today is January 14, 2012. We took November and December off. This website went up in mid-August and the last time we added the story of a vaccine-injured child was in September. In one month's time, Vaxtruth published 22 stories of serious adverse reactions from vaccines. This could be seen as one indication that these deaths and other serious injuries may not be as rare as we are led to believe. Thankfully, for those who want to look further into the question, "How rare are vaccine-injuries?" the investigation does not end here.

The United States Government has set up a system where parents and physicians can make a report if a child suffers an adverse reaction from vaccination. Serious reactions from vaccines are legally mandated to be reported by physicians; however, this often does not happen (as many of us, myself included can attest to). Adults who are vaccine-injured should also file reports, documenting what happened. Reporting vaccine reactions is essential to knowing just how "rare" they really are. The [Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#) also has a search engine so people like me can go in and access the data. We can check for ourselves about the types of reactions suffered by children and adults.

If you go to the [VAERS homepage](#) you will see a link to the right which will take you to their [official blurb about the safety of seasonal flu vaccines](#). If you read this little summary from the CDC you will notice that during the 2010-2011 flu season there was an increase in the reports of febrile seizures in children under the age of two who received the trivalent flu vaccine. The term "febrile seizures" indicates that these infants developed fevers after receiving the flu shot, and their fevers were high enough to cause seizures. Have you noticed how many more children have seizures nowadays as compared to the past? I have. My daughter also had a seizure after a vaccine. It happened 3 hours after she got the Tdap or Tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccine. It lasted for two minutes and nearly killed her. She stopped breathing and had to be resuscitated. She didn't have a fever. Seizures are one of the most common adverse reactions to vaccines of all types, and they are not always the result of fever. Just so you know....

Back to VAERS. If you just read the summary from the CDC about flu vaccine-safety, you are left with the impression that severe reactions to the flu vaccine are "very rare" and are limited to "febrile seizures." If that's as far as you go, that's all you get. What happens if you dig a little deeper?

When I go back to the VAERS homepage and click to enter the VAERS system I am immediately met with a long disclaimer telling me that what I am about to report is most likely not a vaccine-injury. I am informed by the CDC (they are the EXPERTS, right?) that every year millions of infants suffer adverse medical conditions including high fevers, seizures, and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), and these "coincidentally" occur within a short time of the child receiving a vaccine. The next paragraph "encourages" physicians to report these events even though they are "most likely coincidental." This is a problem. Physicians are extremely busy. That's why you sit in the "waiting room" for so long before you get to see them. If your physician is like mine, you may wait for hours

before finally passing through the magic door of the inner sanctum. Once inside, you are escorted by a nurse to the examining room where you are left alone to wait some more. Eventually you hear a knock on the door and in breezes your doctor, simultaneously flipping through your chart and asking, "Why are you here?" One study conducted a few years ago found that primary care physicians in the U.S. spend an average of 3 minutes or less with their patients during an office visit. I tried to find the study today, but when I googled it I was inundated with so many results documenting the difficulties of physicians and their time crunches it would take me the rest of the day to get through them all. Since the woes of doctors under managed care is not the topic of this post, I will leave the citation for another day. The gist of this is.... Doctors are busy. They are pushed to see so many patients in a single day and then they have paperwork to do. They don't get reimbursed for the paperwork, which is constantly increasing in bulk and complexity. And guess what else? They don't get reimbursed for the time it takes to report a vaccine-reaction either. This is another problem. When physicians are already overworked and reimbursement rates are falling, there is no incentive for them to report a reaction they are being told is "coincidental." Could this be one reason why the AMA estimates that only 1.5% of vaccine-reactions are ever reported?

With the very low report rate of vaccine-reactions to VAERS, you can probably understand how physicians AND parents could come to the conclusion that serious vaccine-injuries are "extremely rare." IF someone actually takes the time to further explore VAERS, he or she would need to know about the issue of under-reporting in order to come away with an accurate risk assessment. This is related to the very important tenet of "informed consent" for medical treatment. Vaccination is a medical procedure. If we do not have a system that allows us to see an accurate approximation of the true numbers of vaccine-injuries, how are parents supposed to make informed decisions about vaccination? If VAERS is the best we have, but doctors don't realize what vaccine-injuries look like, and if they don't realize that it is MANDATORY to report serious injuries, we will never have an accurate picture of the true toll of death and destruction caused by vaccines.

I invite you to check out the VAERS reporting system and to click through a few of the links to see what it takes to make a report. It's not easy, especially if it's your first time. I suspect there are some doctors out there who actually do take the time to attempt to file a report, but who get quickly frustrated with the hoops they have to jump through and give up. After all, chances are the reaction was just "coincidence" anyway... If a physician (or parent) wanted to search through the VAERS data to see if the suspected reaction was similar to others that have been reported, he or she would also have to jump through a lot of hoops. The system is difficult to use, even for those of us who have excellent skills in research and computer applications. For the average parent (especially one who is grieving and/or caring for a vaccine-injured child) I would think it would be extremely frustrating.

For parents who are reading this post and wondering how to find out what kinds of reactions have occurred to vaccines, there is an easier way to search the data. The National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC) has provided the public with a much simpler way to search the data. If you go to [NVIC's Vaccine Reactions page](#) you will see a horizontal red oblong button that reads "Search

MedAlerts.” Click that button. If you are reading this post and searching MedAlerts simultaneously I suggest you open another tab on your browser. That way you can go back and forth...

There are a lot of options on the form. If you want to see what adverse reactions have been reported for all children and adults for a particular type of vaccine... let's say the flu vaccine, skip the first two sections and go directly to section 3. "Select Vaccine Information." Scroll down in the box until you see the four options that start with FLU or FLUN. If you want to see reactions for all types of flu vaccines, click on the first FLU option and see that it now says "ALL VACCINES" in the box labeled "Currently Selected." Next look to the upper right of the "Currently Selected" box. You will see a white, rectangular button that says "FIND." Click it. As of this morning (January 14, 2012) there are 61,494 events reported to the VAERS database. These are adverse events to flu vaccines that were severe enough for those reporting them to take the time to jump through the hoops on the VAERS database. If you scroll down on the page you will find the beginning of the reports. As of this morning there are 6,150 pages of reports, with each page containing 10 entries. That's an awful lot of reports to go through. Let's see if we can narrow it down a bit.

Click the "Back" button and return to the "Vaccine Products" form. Leave this alone; the selection should stay the same.

Go to Number 4: "Select Event Characteristics." Click the box on the upper left that says "Serious." Go to the right side of the blue bar and click the "FIND" button. As of this morning there are 7,463 serious adverse events reported for flu vaccines. Now multiply that number by 98.5, since the AMA estimates only 1.5% of vaccine reactions are reported. I did the math. The actual number of serious adverse reactions to flu vaccines is probably in the neighborhood of 735,105 (Seven hundred thirty-five thousand, one hundred and five). While you are on this results page, look at the table that breaks down serious adverse reactions by age. Specifically, look at the results for children between the ages of 6 and 9 years. (Note: data is calculated for children six years and older, but less than nine years) There are (as of this morning) 99 serious adverse reactions in this age group. If you have read my post [Death By Flu Shot. 7 Year Old Receives Flu Vaccine; Dies 4 Days Later](#) you will recall that there are an average of FIVE deaths each year from flu among 7 year-olds living in the United States. We can estimate that for the age range 6-9 years, there would be 15 deaths from seasonal flu (5 for each year of age). If you do the math and calculate the actual approximate risk of serious vaccine reaction (99 x 98.5) the number of serious vaccine reactions for the 6-9 age group is 9,751. Now, we must remember that the number we are looking at is the number of serious adverse events that have occurred over multiple years, while the risk of death from flu is calculated for only one year. Can we refine this so it's more accurate?

Once again, click the "Back" button and return to the entry form.

Go to Number 5: "Select Demographics." If the menu is not already open, you may need to go to the right side of the horizontal blue bar and click on the upside-down triangle that says "Open." Go

to the box that is farthest to the right and click where it says "Age (Range)." Enter the number 6 in the first box and 9 in the second box. This will break down the data so the serious adverse events to flu vaccine are only reported for children aged 6 to 9 years. Do not click the "Find" button yet. We still have to tell the form what year we want to know about.

Go to Number 6: "Select Dates." For "Vaccination Date" select **2011** and **Entire Year** in both sections (From and To). This narrows down the data so you are only requesting reported adverse events from flu vaccines administered between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011. Now click the FIND button. As of this morning there have been FIVE serious adverse events reported for flu vaccines in children age 6-9 years for the year 2011. If you scroll down you will see there is one death listed and it was in a seven year-old. A seven year-old BOY. This is not the report for Kaylynne Matten. This is the report of another seven year-old who died from flu vaccine last year. Kaylynne's death is not in the system yet. If her death is ruled to be "coincidence" and not due to vaccine-injury, it may never be in this system. Now remember, we need to multiply the results by 98.5 to get a true estimate, according to the findings of the American Medical Association. $5 \times 98.5 = 492.5$... This number, 492.5, is the approximate number of serious adverse reactions to the flu vaccine that were suffered by children age 6-9 years during the year 2011. Given that according to the CDC's own data, there are approximately 15 deaths from flu in the U.S. each year among children in the 6-9 age group, you have to ask yourself, "Is the flu vaccine really worth the risk?"

If parents don't know about VAERS, and if doctors are too busy or believe reactions are "extremely rare," and if there are no consequences for doctors who fail to report these "mandatory" vaccine-injuries, how will we ever get an accurate picture of the number of children and adults who suffer and die from vaccines each year?

Is the risk really all that "rare?"

Now that you know how to use the VAERS database, spend some time looking at other vaccines and reading the reports of injuries. Then you will be more prepared to answer that question yourself. Remember, you are the one who is responsible for making health care decisions for your child. You are also the one who will be caring for your child if he or she is seriously injured, and you will be the one grieving if he or she dies as a result of vaccine-injury. As Barbara Loe Fisher said, "When it happens to your child, the risks are 100 percent."

Educate before you vaccinate.