

## CDC's DTP/DTaP Vaccine Information Materials (Cont.)

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### What Are the Risks From These Vaccines?

As with any medicine, there are very small risks that serious problems, even death, could occur after getting a vaccine.

The risks from the vaccines are much smaller than the risks from the diseases if people stopped using vaccine. Below is a list of problems that may occur after getting the vaccine. If your child ever had one of the moderate or severe problems listed below or any other serious problem after DTP, DTaP, or DT, discuss it with your doctor or nurse before this vaccination.

### Mild Problems

If these problems occur, they usually start within hours to a day or two after vaccination. They usually last up to 1-2 days:

- soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- fever

- fussiness, drowsiness, less appetite

These problems are much less likely to occur with DTaP than with DTP.

Acetaminophen or ibuprofen (not aspirin) may be used to prevent or reduce fever and soreness. This is especially important for children who have had seizures or have a parent, brother, or sister who has had seizures.

### Moderate Problems

Once for every 100-1,000 doses of DTP (less after DTaP):

- on-going crying for 3 hours or more
- fever of 105 deg. or higher
- an unusual, high-pitched cry

Once for 1,750 doses of DTP (less after DTaP):

- a seizure (jerking and staring spell) usually caused by fever
- "shock-collapse" (becomes pale, limp, and less alert)

### Severe Problems

These problems happen very rarely: decreased consciousness, coma, or long seizure following DTP. Some of these children may have lasting brain damage. There is disagreement about whether or not DTP causes the lasting brain damage. If it does, it is very rare. The risk of decreased consciousness, coma, or long seizure after DTaP is not yet known, but experts believe it is even less likely to occur than after DTP.

a serious allergic reaction

What to do if there is a serious reaction:  
+ Call a doctor or get the person to a doctor right away.

+ Write down what happened and the date and time it happened.

+ Ask your doctor, nurse, or health department to file a Vaccine Adverse Event Report form, or you can call: (800) 822-7967 (toll-free)

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program gives compensation (payment) for persons thought to be injured by vaccines. For details call: (800) 338-2382 (toll-free).

If you want to learn more, ask your doctor or nurse. She/he can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.

## Nurse Abuses Patients: Firing Upheld By Court.

**A**buse of patients is grounds for terminating a nurse's employment, the New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, ruled in a case where a nurse was accused of verbally abusing one patient and of striking another.

The patients, one developmentally disabled, the other ninety-three years old and afflicted with Alzheimer's, each denied in tape-recorded interviews that the abusive incidents had taken place.

The court, however, ignored the patient's statements and accepted testimony from two student nurses, who both witnessed the incidents and verified that patient abuse had in fact occurred. Marrello vs. Carter, 640 N.Y.S. 2d 679 (N.Y. App., 1996).

## Discharge Of Resident From Intermediate Care Facility: Court Throws Out Family Member's Suit For Retaliation.

**A** very complicated series of events led to the discharge of a developmentally disabled adult resident from an intermediate care facility. The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit (Arkansas) concluded that the medical-care issues arising from his weight problem, sleep apnea, gastrointestinal reflux, esophagitis, asthma and environmental allergies, along with his cognitive deficits, posed unique daily living problems which the intermediate care facility was not able to handle adequately.

Nevertheless, the resident's mother filed suit over her son's discharge from the facility. She claimed in her suit that her son's discharge was motivated by an intent by the facility's administrators to retaliate against her for her continued complaints over the manner in which her son was being treated at the facility. The mother had filed complaints with state authorities saying her son was beaten and subjected to verbal abuse as part of a behavior modification treatment plan to control his overeating and morbid obesity.

The court determined the resident was not beaten or verbally abused, that there were valid patient-care concerns which necessitated the resident's discharge from the facility in order that he could be placed in a more appropriate setting better geared toward meeting his needs, and that the facility's administrators had not been motivated by any intent to retaliate against the resident's mother in making decisions concerning his care and placement.

However, the court did state in general terms that patients and families can sue if a patient is discharged from a care setting in retaliation for legitimate complaints over patient-care issues. Alexander vs. Pathfinder, Inc., 91 F. 3d 59 (8th Cir., 1996).