

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

FEB 08 2017

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

Ms. Rita Hoffman
rita@fastmail.net

Dear Ms. Hoffman:

Thank you for your letter of December 12, 2016, concerning vaccine safety, and for the enclosed copy of *The Peanut Allergy Epidemic: What's Causing It and How to Stop It* by Ms. Heather Fraser.

Vaccines authorized for use in Canada are highly effective and extremely safe. Like all medicines, vaccines undergo several stages of rigorous testing to ensure their safety and effectiveness before they are approved for use by Health Canada. Once the review is complete and the product is deemed safe and effective, a Drug Identification Number (DIN) is issued. Regulators and public health authorities monitor vaccines after they are approved to detect any previously unrecognized safety concerns. Any information on a possible safety concern is communicated very rapidly among different countries. This careful monitoring ensures that public health authorities can act quickly to address any concerns.

The PENTA Vaccine to which you refer was a combination of two authorized vaccines, Act-HIB (Haemophilus influenzae type b conjugate vaccine [tetanus protein conjugate]) and DPT Polio Adsorbed (Diphtheria, Tetanus Toxoids, Pertussis and Poliomyelitis Vaccines Adsorbed), both of which had valid DINs. Approval from Health Canada for combining these vaccines was sought and granted through the issuance of a notice of compliance which also included a revised product monograph to reflect the approved combination.

Public health authorities at all levels in Canada take vaccine safety very seriously, from the local medical officers of health through the provincial level and at the federal level. Canada has advanced systems in place to monitor safety and to make medical experts aware of unusual post-vaccine events. For example, in the very rare event that a batch of vaccines results in an unexpected side effect, these systems can ensure that the rest of the batch is not used.

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The PENTA Vaccine used in Canada was monitored by individual health care providers across the country and specialists in pediatric hospitals through a system of active surveillance. No safety concerns were identified that warranted any action regarding the PENTA Vaccine. By approving the combining of two approved vaccines by health care providers, one a liquid formulation and the other available in freeze-dried form, Canadian children were spared extra injections.

For more information regarding immunization in Canada, please visit <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/immunization-immunisation/index-eng.php>.

Again, thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Philpott". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

The Honourable Jane Philpott, P.C., M.P.

c.c. Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P.