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My name is Lori Leonard, from Colwich, Kansas. Thank you for your time. My husband, Chad, and I are the parents of 6 children, ages 2 to 13 years old.

We both grew up with families with many members in the medical field. Because of this, we didn't think twice about vaccinating our first baby, since that is what our parents before us did. We did no research on the issue beforehand. However, in 1999, when our first baby was 8 months old, after having all his recommended shots on schedule during his short life, he became critically ill. Grant was admitted to the hospital with no doctor able to figure out what was wrong with him for over 24 hours. He was dehydrated and all they could tell me to do was supplement my breastfeeding with formula, which he continued to spit up. Finally when he spit blood onto my shoulder, they decided to xray his abdomen. Upon doing this, they discovered an obstruction in his intestines.

Surgery was required to correct this condition by removing part of his dead intestine which was ready to burst. It was discovered his intestine had turned into itself called intussusceptions. We were blessed by his survival, but this was a changing point in our lives. We can never prove that any of his shots caused this problem; in fact, we've never tried to do that. Since then, however, one rotavirus shot was taken off the market in 1999 for causing intussusceptions. We couldn't stop wondering if other shots could have caused it also.

This experience with our first baby propelled us to be more careful and well informed about vaccinations with all our children. Our decision of whether to vaccinate or not is not an easy one and one that we talk with our pediatricians about regularly. In the end, or ultimately, we are confident that the decisions we make as parents for the health and safety of our children will be the best for our family.

Even with the stress and emotion of watching our infant suffer during a traumatic experience, we do not tell anyone whether they should vaccinate or not. However, we believe parents have the right to make the end decision about what shots their children will get and when. Thank you for your time and attention.