

BMC recalls vaccine batch after baby dies

Pratibha Masand | TNN

Mumbai: Civic officials are scrambling for answers after three-month-old Megha Devkari died on Thursday, hours after she was administered an oral polio vaccine and two injections for Hepatitis-B and DTP. The BMC conducted a health check on the eight children who, along with Megha, had been vaccinated from the same vial on Wednesday. Though all were found to be healthy, BMC has stopped usage of the batch. "The vaccines had a particular batch number. Nearly 95,000 people have been administered the DPT vaccine and 169 doses of oral polio have been given to people over the last few months. No complications have been reported," said Dr Arun Bamne, BMC joint executive health officer.

Samples of the vaccines will be sent to pathology lab in Kasauli. Dr Nitin Shah, former president of Indian Academy of Paediatrics, said that while it is possible for a body to experience adverse effects after vaccination, Megha's death cannot be linked to the vaccines without proper investigation. "It may also be possible that the child was suffering from some complication and the fever triggered by the vaccine (which is normal) aggravated the condition."

Dr Hemant Thacker, who consults in Jaslok Hospital, said: "In rare cases, a vaccine microbe may cause the same disease against which it was sent to prepare the body. But



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WHAT IS A VACCINE

A vaccine is a 'biological preparation' created to improve a person's immunity to a particular disease. It contains an agent that resembles the disease-causing microorganism, and is often made from weakened or killed forms of the microbe



How It Works

► The vaccine stimulates the body's immune system to recognize the agent as a foreign body, destroy it, and 'remember' it.

► At a later stage, the body recognizes the protein coat on the virus, and is prepared to respond by neutralizing it before it can enter cells. It recognizes and destroys infected cells

Risk Factor | In rare instances, it is possible for the 'weakened microbe' to develop into a more virulent form either once it is administered into patient's body or even before. If the microbes get activated, the disease may manifest in the patient. The time period is usually more than a week. Three-month old Megha Devkari died on Thursday within ten hours of being administered the vaccine

it takes nearly a week for the body to get the disease." Megha died on Thursday, 10 hours after she was vaccinated.

A vaccine may also cause an uncontrolled allergic reaction. "Vaccine components

include chicken embryo, sheep cells, or monkey blood cultures. In vaccines like that of Hepatitis-B, the component is human recombinant DNA, which is the only one that does not cause reaction," he said.

3-month-old girl dies, kin blame polio, DPT shots

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Mumbai: A three-month-old girl from Dahisar died hours after she was administered polio and DPT vaccinations by civic health workers.

Blaming the vaccinations for the girl's death, her family claimed that there could be no other explanation for the tragedy. While the police registered a case of accidental death, the civic authorities said the girl might have had some other complications. Initial probe revealed that eight other children were vaccinated using the same vials, but there were no reports of any complications yet.

On Wednesday afternoon, health workers from an Arogya Kendra in the Kokanipada slum of Dahisar went around asking the locals if their children had been vaccinated. At Ramesh Devkari's home, they were told that the former's three-month-old daughter, Megha, had to be vaccinated when she was six weeks old but she missed it. "We had gone to visit our native place in Nepal when Megha was to get her polio vaccination. So, when the health workers came home, we told them that Megha had missed her vaccination," said Ramesh.

The workers then asked him and his wife Manisha to take the girl to a civic Arogya Kendra. Once there, the workers gave her two injections — polio and DPT (diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus).

Megha got her vaccination shots at 12.30pm. Within three hours, she started getting a fever. "They said she might get fever and even told us to give her medicines if that happened," said Ramesh, adding that Megha's fever receded a few hours after they gave her the medicines. "By 11.30pm, she was

much better and was playing with us. After that, we went to sleep," said Ramesh, who works in a jewellery-making unit.

However, when Megha's mother woke up around 4.30am the next day to feed her, she found that the girl was not responding. "We tried to shake her, but she never woke up," said Ramesh, whose wife was inconsolable on Thursday after the two rushed to Bhagwati Hospital and were told that their daughter was dead.

Sub-inspector Mahesh Girme of the Dahisar police said: "The child's body was sent for a post-mortem and some organ

Sandeep Takke



Megha's distraught parents

samples would have to be sent for forensic tests. We would be able to ascertain the cause of death and take action only after we get the reports. However, this might take months."

The civic authorities said they would check the condition of all the children who got their shots from the same vials. "We will check them for signs of any complications. We will also look into the entire batch of medication that we have got from the state. Only a forensic probe would reveal whether the girl died because of the vaccines or it was a stray incident, and if she was suffering from an existing condition," said Dr Arun Bamne, joint executive health officer, BMC.