



Vaccination Policy

We firmly believe in vaccine safety, its effectiveness to prevent serious illness and also that it save lives. We think parents have a duty to vaccinate their children, both for the good of the child and for the good of the community. They have a duty to prevent their children from spreading disease to other people (some who may not be able to get vaccinated for medical reasons).

We recommend that all children and young adults should receive the vaccines according to the schedule published by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Based on all available literature, evidence and current studies, we firmly believe, that vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disabilities. We firmly believe that thimerosal, a preservative that has been in vaccines for decades does not cause autism or other developmental disabilities. (all vaccines we give to infants, do not have thimerosal).

We firmly believe that vaccinating children and young adults is the single most important intervention we perform as health care providers. The recommended vaccines and their schedule given are the results of many years of scientific study and data-gathering on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.

These things being said, we recognize that there has always been and will likely always be controversy surrounding vaccination. The vaccine campaign is truly a victim of its own success. It is precisely because vaccines are so effective at preventing illness that we are even discussing whether or not they should be given. Because of vaccines, many of you have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, meningitis or even chicken pox. Such success can make us complacent about vaccinating. This attitude, if widespread, can only lead to tragic results.

Over the past several years, many people in Europe have chosen not to vaccinate their children with the MMR vaccine after publication of an unfounded suspicion (later retracted) that the vaccine caused autism. As a result, there have been outbreaks of measles and deaths from complications of measles in Europe over the past several years.

Furthermore, by not vaccinating your child you are taking selfish advantage of thousands of others who do vaccinate their children, decreasing the likelihood that your child will contract one of these diseases. We feel such an attitude is unacceptable. Schools can reasonably exclude children who remain unvaccinated from attending school during influenza season because those children pose a risk to others and because an influenza outbreak can be very disruptive to the educational process.

We are making you aware of these facts not to scare you or coerce you, but to emphasize the importance of vaccination. We recognize the choice may be an emotional one for some parents. We will do everything we can do to convince you that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do. However, should you have doubts, please discuss these with physician **in advance of your visit**. In limited cases, we may slightly alter the schedule. Please be advised that "breaking up the vaccines" to give one or two at a time goes against expert recommendations and can put your child at risk for serious illness and even death due to incomplete and delayed protection. Such additional visits will likely require another co-payment on your part and insurance might not pay for visit. We will not administer separate vaccines that are available in a combination, such as MMR.

We believe that vaccine refusal is often only the first step in one sided parent-physician relationship, where our experience, our training and expertise are disregarded. We believe that our

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duty is towards our patient's health first and not towards parent's belief. Most of our patients cannot speak themselves at age when they need protection from various diseases most. They do have first right to be healthy. By acquiescing to parents demands against our better judgment, we not only deny ourselves any partnership promoting the patient's health, but assume tremendous liability when health fails. This holds true for vaccines, antibiotics and any advice we may dispense during office visits. Such relationships are unproductive and unsatisfying for parents, patients and physicians alike and undermine the promotion of effective health.

Finally, if you absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child despite all our efforts, we will ask you to find another practice who shares your philosophy.

As physicians, we feel strongly that vaccinating children on schedule with currently available vaccines is absolutely the right thing to do for all children and young adults. Thank you for your time in reading this policy, and please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have with any of us.

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