



# The Pediatric Center

## Vaccine Policy Statement

### **We firmly believe:**

- *in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives.*
- *in the safety of our vaccines.*
- *that all children and young adults should receive all recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics.*
- *based on all available literature, evidence, and current studies, that vaccines, nor thimerosal, a preservative which has been removed from infant vaccines, cause autism or other developmental disabilities.*
- *that vaccinating children and young adults may be the single most important health-promoting intervention we perform as health care providers and that parents can offer their children. The recommended vaccines and their immunization schedule are the results of years and years of scientific study and data gathered on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.*

We recognize that there has always been and will likely always be controversy surrounding vaccination and it may be emotional for some parents. Indeed, Benjamin Franklin, persuaded by his brother, was opposed to smallpox vaccine until scientific data convinced him otherwise. Tragically, he had delayed inoculating his son Frank, who contracted smallpox and died at the age of 4, leaving Ben with a lifetime of guilt and remorse.

Quoting Mr. Franklin's autobiography:

*"In 1736, I lost one of my sons, a fine boy of four years old, by the smallpox...I long regretted bitterly, and still regret that I had not given it to him by inoculation. This I mention for the sake of parents who omit that operation, on the supposition that they should never forgive themselves if a child died under it, my example showing that the regret may be the same either way, and that, therefore, the safer should be chosen."*

### **Why Vaccines Are In Debate**

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 administered. Due to the success of vaccines, many parents have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis, or even chickenpox, or known a friend or family member whose child died of one of these diseases. Such success can make us complacent about vaccinating against a preventable disease, which if it becomes 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 of decreased immunizations, there have been small outbreaks of measles and several deaths from complications of measles in Europe over the past several years.

By not vaccinating your child, you are not only putting your child at risk, you are also putting thousands of other children who have been vaccinated at risk. No vaccine is 100% effective. Increasing community immunity to a preventable disease is the only way to decrease the likelihood that your child or others susceptible individuals will contract one of these diseases. (con't)

## Vaccine Policy Statement (con't)

### If You Have Questions

Our job as healthcare providers is to strongly encourage you to vaccinate your children based on the current recommended schedule. However, should you feel uncertain, please call our office to discuss your concerns with your health care provider in **advance of your visit**.

In some cases, we may alter the schedule to accommodate any concerns or reservations. Please be advised, however, that delaying or “breaking up the vaccines” to give one or two at a time over two or more visits goes against expert recommendations, and can put your child at risk for serious illness (or even death) and goes against our medical advice as providers at The Pediatric Center.

**\*\*Please note, additional visits will require additional co-pays on your part and may not be reimbursable by your insurance carrier.**

As medical professionals, we feel very strongly that vaccinating children on schedule with currently available vaccines is absolutely the right thing to do for all children and young adults, for everyone’s safety. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any one of our practitioners.

If you decide to refuse to vaccinate your child despite our strong recommendation, we ask you to find an alternate health care provider.

Thank you.

The Medical Staff of The Pediatric Center