

## **The Importance of Immunizing Children: A to Z Pediatrics Practice Policy**

We firmly believe in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives. We firmly believe in the safety of our vaccines. We firmly believe that all children and young adults should receive all of the recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

We firmly believe that vaccinating children and young adults may be the single most important health-promoting intervention we perform as health care providers, and that you can perform as parents/caregivers. The recommended vaccines and their schedule given are the results of years and years of scientific study and data gathering on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians. We firmly believe, based on all available literature, evidence and current studies, that vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disabilities.

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, bacterial meningitis, or known a friend or family member whose child died of one of these diseases. Such success can make us complacent about vaccinating. But such an attitude, 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 under immunization, there have been small outbreaks of measles and several deaths from complications of measles in Europe over the past several years.

We are making you aware of these facts not to scare you or coerce you, but to emphasize the importance of vaccinating your child. In some cases, we may alter the schedule to accommodate parental 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).** Such additional visits will require additional co-pays on your part. Furthermore, please realize that you will be required to sign a “Refusal to Vaccinate” acknowledgement in the event of lengthy delays.

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. Thank you for your time in reading this policy, and please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any one of us.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Kotler, M.D.

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