

Growing Child Pediatrics Vaccine Policy

As a practice we firmly believe in the importance of childhood vaccinations. Therefore, we recommend that our patients be vaccinated according to the official schedule of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

However, the growing tide of concern over possible side effects of vaccines has made some parents ask for an alternative vaccine schedule, and others hesitant to vaccinate at all. Although there is no evidence-based reason to alter the vaccine schedule, we are sensitive to the needs of the family, and wish to make parents comfortable with the idea of vaccinating their children. We have the following guidelines in place for providers and families who wish to deviate from the official schedule of the American Academy of Pediatrics:

If parents wish for their children to be fully vaccinated, but wish to space out the vaccines, we have an “Alternative Vaccine Schedule Agreement”. Parents must fill in their schedule, read and sign the agreement, and must be compliant with the schedule. In addition to the routine well-child check-up visits, families may be scheduled for additional “vaccine visits” with a provider, and will pay a co-pay for these visits (much like a synagis visit). If the family misses two scheduled visits, then we will attempt to revoke the alternative schedule, and the provider will try to “catch up” the child’s vaccines in an appropriate manner.

If parents wish to refuse certain vaccines or all vaccines, the provider will go over with them the importance of such vaccines and the risks of contracting the corresponding diseases. The parent must then filled out and sign an AAP “Refusal to Vaccinate” form. Refusal to sign this document is grounds for dismissal from the practice. We still strongly recommend routine well-child check-up visits.

In the case of adolescent vaccines, we will recommend vaccines and parents may verbally delay these without any consequence as long as the provider feels that they will be compliant in the near future.

Obviously, if there are medical reasons for delaying vaccines or altering the routine schedule then that should be done at the discretion of the provider.

Growing Child Pediatrics Vaccine 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, based on all available literature, evidence and current studies, that vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disabilities.
- We firmly believe that thimerosal, a preservative that has been in vaccines for decades and remains in some vaccines, does not cause autism or other developmental disabilities.
- 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.

The vaccine campaign is truly a victim of its own success. Because of vaccines, many of you 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 as we do not fear what we are preventing. But such an attitude, if it becomes widespread, can only lead to tragic results. Time and again studies have shown that by stopping vaccination the diseases make a comeback in the community.

We recognize that the choice may be a very emotional one for some parents. We will do everything we can to convince you that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do. Should you have doubts, please discuss these with your health care provider in advance of your visit.

Delaying or “breaking up the vaccines” 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 Growing Child Pediatrics. If we cannot convince you and you wish to set up some alternative schedule, your provider will have you sign a “Alternative Vaccinate Schedule Agreement” form.

Finally, if you should absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child despite all our efforts, you will be required to sign a “Refusal to Vaccinate” form. Please recognize that by not vaccinating you are putting your child at unnecessary risk for life-threatening illness and disability, and even death.

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,

The Providers of Growing Child Pediatrics