

Kids First Pediatrics' Vaccine Policy Statement

We firmly believe in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives.

We believe in the safety of the vaccines our practice administers to our patients.

We also 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 (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

We 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 had been in vaccines for decades and has been eliminated from nearly all 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 the brightest American and international scientists and physicians.

These things being said, we recognize that there has always been and will likely always be controversy surrounding vaccination. 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 Franky, 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.

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, most of us have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, bacterial meningitis or diphtheria, or known a friend or family member whose child died of one of these diseases. Such success can make us complacent about vaccinating our children. If such an attitude becomes widespread, the outcomes can be tragic.

Over the past several years, an increasing number of people 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 outbreaks of measles and mumps, as well as several deaths from complications of measles in the US and Europe. If more and more parents choose to not have their children vaccinated, the protection they would derive from those who have will become less effective, leading to further increases in such illnesses.

In order for vaccinations to prevent disease, 97-99% of the population must receive each immunization (known as herd immunity). As more and more parents choose not to vaccinate, or delay vaccinations, we are becoming dangerously close to losing our "herd immunity," and are putting all of our children at risk.

As members of the North Carolina State Vaccine Program, the majority of vaccines we administer to our patients are provided to Kids First Pediatrics at no cost. We are obligated by our contract with the state of North Carolina to abide by the current AAP vaccine administration schedule, and it is also a state law. Our contract with the state also stipulates that children who are not vaccinated according to this schedule may not meet childcare and/or school admittance requirements, resulting in possible exclusion from that program.

It has been repeatedly proven that our children can definitely "handle" the simultaneously administered vaccines recommended by the AAP and several other credible organizations. In fact, it is estimated that a healthy child's immune system is able to effectively process **100 times** the number of "bugs" when compared to the maximum number presently administered at any one visit.

We are making you aware of these facts not to scare you or coerce you, but to emphasize the importance of vaccinating your child. We recognize that the choice may be a very emotional one for some parents, especially with the incessant flow of data bombarding us all via the internet and lay press. We strongly believe that the current AAP vaccine schedule is the "gold standard," and should be adhered to in order to provide your child with the protection we believe they are entitled to. Therefore, as of September 1, 2008, Kids First Pediatrics will ONLY utilize the vaccine administration schedule structured and endorsed by the AAP and CDC, and will NOT accept any of the various "alternative" vaccine administration schedules that have no proven benefit. If an "alternative" schedule had been requested *prior to* September 1, 2008, we require a written vaccine administration schedule to be provided by the patient's parents, which must then be approved by a Kids First Pediatrics' physician. The only exception to this policy will be based upon documented medical indications, at the discretion of the patient's physician. **After September 1, 2008, Kids First Pediatrics will not accept any new patients who cannot comply with this policy.** Should a parent refuse to have their child(ren) vaccinated at all, Kids First Pediatrics reserves the right to dismiss that patient from the practice.

As medical professionals, we feel very strongly that vaccinating children according to the currently established and accepted American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is absolutely the right thing to do for all children and young adults (we also encourage you to review their website, at www.cispimmunize.org for more information). 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 member of the Kids First Pediatrics staff.

Sincerely,

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