



VACCINE POLICY STATEMENT

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 Prevention 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. 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 even chickenpox, or known a friend or family member whose child died of one of these diseases. Such success can make us complacent or even lazy about vaccinating. But such an attitude, if it become widespread, can only lead to tragic results.

IF HESITANT TO VACCINATE PLEASE CONSIDER :

After publication of an unfounded accusation (later retracted) that MMR vaccine caused autism in 1998, many people in Europe chose not to vaccinate their children. As a result of underimmunization, there were large outbreaks of measles, with several deaths from complications from the disease. In 2010 there were more than 3000 cases of whooping cough in California, with nine deaths in children less than six months of age. Again, many of those who contracted the illness (and then passed it on to the infants, who were too young to have been fully vaccinated) had made a conscious decision not to vaccinate.

Furthermore, by not vaccinating your child you are taking advantage of thousand of others who do vaccinate their children, which decreases the likelihood that your child will contract one of these diseases. WE feel such an attitude to be unacceptable.

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. We will do everything we can to convince you that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do. However, **should you have doubts, please discuss these with your health care provider in advance of your visit. 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 of serious illness (or even death) and goes against our medical advice as providers at Pediatric Associates of Fall River, Inc.** Such additional visits may 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.

Finally, if you should absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child despite all our efforts, we will ask you to find another health care provider who shares your views.

We do not keep a list of such providers, nor would we recommend any such physician. Please recognize that by not vaccinating you are putting your child at unnecessary risk for life-threatening illness and disability, and even death.

OUR POLICY / RECOMMENDATION

All patients in the practice are expected to receive all infant AAP recommended immunizations by two years of age, the standard school age 4 and 5 year old vaccines, pre adolescent and adolescent vaccines.

As medical professionals, 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 have about vaccines with any one of us.