

Pediatrics East, Inc

Vaccine Policy Statement

The doctors and nurse practitioners of Pediatrics East, Inc., 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 remain 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 the ages at which they are given are the result of years and years of scientific study and data gathered on millions of children by many 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 favorite 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, many of you have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis or even chickenpox, or know 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 becomes widespread, can only lead to tragic results.

Over the past decade, many people in Europe and Japan have chosen not to immunize their children with the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine after publication of an unfounded suspicion (later retracted) that the vaccine caused autism. As a result of fewer children being protected against these illnesses, there have been small outbreaks of measles and several deaths from the complications of measles in Europe and Japan over the past several years. But a number of studies have shown that even when there is no increase in the utilization of MMR vaccine, the rate of autism continues to climb. And the risk of autism is the same in immunized and non-immunized children. (In other words, the MMR vaccine does not cause autism). The same is true of thimerosal. Very few vaccines now contain this preservative, but the rate of autism continues to climb. (In other words, thimerosal does not cause autism).

Furthermore, by not vaccinating your child you are taking unfair advantage of thousands 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 self-centered and 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 doctor or nurse practitioner in advance of your visit.** 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) and goes against our medical advice as providers at Pediatrics East, Inc.** 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.

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.

As medical professionals, we feel very strongly that immunizing children on schedule with currently available vaccines is absolutely the right thing to do for all children and young adults. We follow the very same immunization schedule for our own children and grandchildren as we do for your children and grandchildren.

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 Doctors and Nurse Practitioners of Pediatrics East, Inc.

This Vaccine Policy Statement has been adapted from a Statement originally developed by All Start Pediatrics of Lionville, PA and is used with their permission.