



Advanced  
Pediatric  
Associates<sup>LLP</sup>

## **Advanced Pediatric Associates Vaccine Policy Statement**

*We firmly believe that childhood vaccines are critically important to a child's long term health.*

*We firmly believe that these vaccines prevent serious illness and 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 was widely used in vaccines for decades and remains in some vaccines in small amounts, does not cause autism or other developmental disabilities. In fact, the scientific and medical community - including the Centers for Disease Control, the Food and Drug Administration, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the Institute of Medicine, the Canadian Health Authority, and the World Health Organization - is united in its conviction that there is no link between preservatives in vaccines and autism.

We firmly agree with Renee R. Jenkins, MD, FAAP, former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics, that, "Vaccines are the single-most powerful, cost-effective public health intervention ever developed." In fact, we believe that vaccinating our patients is probably the single most important contribution our practice can make to the long term health and well being of children in our community.

As stated in a letter to parents from Jay E. Berkelhamer, MD, FAAP, former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics, "When it comes to child health, prevention is always better than treatment. Nowhere is this more evident than with immunization." Dr. Berkelhamer's letter continues with the following important vaccine related facts:

- Prior to the creation of today's vaccines, thousands – and sometimes millions – of children became infected with diseases that resulted in lifelong disabilities or death.
- Before the measles vaccine became available in 1963, measles killed 3,000 U.S. children and caused 48,000 hospitalizations annually.
- Vaccine preventable diseases like polio, whooping cough, and measles still exist! In the 1980's when measles immunization rates among preschool children dropped, there was an outbreak in 1989-90 resulting in 55,000 cases of measles, 11,000 hospitalizations, and 123 deaths in the U.S.

The fact that we don't see certain diseases anymore doesn't mean they no longer exist... it simply means the vaccines are working! Because of the success of vaccines, most parents today have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis, or even chickenpox. Most of us have not known a friend or family member whose child died of one of these diseases. Unfortunately, the success of vaccines has made some parents complacent about vaccinating. But such an attitude, if it becomes widespread, can lead to tragic results! When parents refuse to vaccinate their children, they not only put their own children at risk, they also pose a danger to younger infants and children in our community who may not yet have been vaccinated.

We recognize that there is controversy in the media regarding vaccinations and that the choice to vaccinate may be an emotional one for some parents. We want to assure parents that the recommended vaccines and their schedule are the result of years of scientific study and data gathered on millions of children by the world's brightest scientists and physicians. We will do everything we can to convince parents that vaccinating their children according to the recommended schedule is the right thing to do. However, for parents that continue to have doubts regarding vaccinating their children, we will enforce the following policies:

- *Parents who have concerns regarding vaccinating their child must schedule a separate immunization consultation visit so that our providers will have enough time allocated to fully address concerns.*
- *If parents request that we break up vaccinations (departing from recommended schedule), we may or may not be able to accommodate the request. If the request is granted, there may be additional co-pay charges based on your insurance. Parents should be advised that delaying or "breaking up vaccines" can put their child at risk for serious illness and goes against the advice of our providers.*
- *Parents who refuse to vaccinate or choose to delay immunizing their children must sign a "Refusal to Vaccinate" form each time acknowledging that they are doing so against the advice of our providers.*

Our goal at Advanced Pediatrics is to provide quality health care to each and every one of our patients. We firmly believe that by administering vaccines according to the recommended schedule, we are protecting the health of the patients we serve. If you would like to discuss concerns regarding vaccinating your children, please speak with one of our care coordinators to schedule an immunization consultation visit.

Sincerely,

*The Providers of Advanced Pediatrics*