

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 vaccines***
- ***We firmly believe that all children and young adults should receive all recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by 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 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***
- ***We commit to all of our patients and families that we will create an environment in our waiting areas and exam rooms that does everything possible to protect them from vaccine-preventable diseases***
- ***Families who choose not to vaccinate their children will not have the foundation for a trusting therapeutic relationship with our providers and will not be well served as patients in our practice***

The recommended vaccine schedule is the result of decades of study by expert scientists and physicians and careful monitoring for adverse effects involving millions of children. At the same time, there has always been controversy surrounding vaccination, and the availability to publicize any opinion (even if it is NOT based on evidence or facts) has grown exponentially with the growth of social media and other internet platforms. *We know that parents, like healthcare providers, want what is best for their children and families, and because of this we understand how concerned parents are when they hear frightening and misleading statements about vaccines.*

Vaccines are truly a victim of their 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 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 becomes widespread, can only lead to tragic results.

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 difficult and emotional one for some parents. **Should you have doubts or questions, please discuss them with your healthcare provider and spend time reviewing the resources included at the end of this policy. Please be advised that delaying or “breaking up” the vaccines to give one or two at a time over multiple visits goes against expert recommendations, can put your child at risk for serious illness (or even death), and goes against our medical advice as providers at Northwest Pediatrics.** Such additional visits can also mean that your child will experience more distress and increase the risk of exposure to seasonal illnesses each time you enter a medical facility.

Because of the risk to your child and other vulnerable patients in our offices, and because preventing illness with vaccines is so fundamental to all of the care we provide for our patients, if you should absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child, 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. 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.

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