



### Vaccine Policy: Piedmont Pediatrics

- **We firmly believe in the effectiveness and safety of the currently recommended vaccines for children and adolescents.**
- **We fully support the current vaccine schedule that is recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics. These schedules are continually studied and revised by experts in the fields of medicine and immunology and public health.**
- **We fully believe based on all the current science and research that vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disabilities. Furthermore, we believe that thimerosal, a mercury-based preservative used in multi-dose vials (currently only some influenza vaccine), does not cause or trigger autism.**
- **We firmly believe that vaccinating children may be the single most important intervention we perform as healthcare providers.**

That being said, we recognize that historically there has always been controversy surrounding routine vaccination. We are victims of our greatest successes in that we rarely see any of these vaccine-preventable infections. We take for granted that we have very high vaccination rates. As a result of under immunizing in certain regions of Europe and the U.S., we are now seeing outbreaks of both pertussis and measles. Both infections can result in hospitalization and even death. Both infections are completely preventable by vaccines.

Our experience with patients and families tells us that if you are completely opposed to routine immunization or significantly disagree with our policy of routine administration as described above, you and our doctors may find it difficult to have a beneficial physician-patient/family relationship. In such circumstances, your family would more likely be better served by another provider and practice. However, we would be happy to discuss your concerns about immunization. Children who are not vaccinated are at a much higher risk of catching a vaccine-preventable disease and may be contagious in our waiting room. This puts many but particularly babies or immunocompromised patients at risk.

Occasionally we are asked to withhold routine vaccines or give vaccines on an "alternative" schedule. There is no alternative schedule recommended by the CDC or the American Academy of Pediatrics; therefore we do not recommend any "alternative" schedule of immunization. Please understand that delaying or splitting up vaccines will increase the interval during which your child is vulnerable to those infections. We also want you to recognize that when we receive urgent phone calls after hours we assume that all children have received

their age- appropriate vaccinations. For example, we would give very different advice on a routine call for a fever or cough in a child that had not received vaccinations.

We do understand how difficult it is to watch children receive multiple injections at one time, and we strive to use combination vaccines when appropriate to minimize the number of shots received. Because we understand that despite medical evidence and our assurances, a few parents and caregivers may still be skeptical about giving multiple vaccines at an office visit, we do try to accommodate our families who want to give fewer vaccines per visit but only if they are given within the “window” period of the recommendations of the AAP and CDC and meet the following conditions below.

Our policy states:

1. All children must receive all vaccines that are mandated for school entry by the State of Virginia
2. All children must begin receiving their immunizations at age two months.
3. We recommend utilizing the immunization schedule as determined by the AAP and CDC.
4. If a parent or caregiver elects to limit their child to less than ordered vaccines at a visit, they must come into the office at 1-2 week intervals to stay within the recommended “window” for vaccines.
5. Parents opting to defer vaccines and return to the office solely for immunizations will be charged a \$25 per visit fee to cover additional administrative costs.
6. Parents or caregivers who are following an alternate vaccine schedule, who don’t adhere to the agreement and who don’t have a medical reason for not bringing their child to the appointment will be given one warning. If they fail to keep an additional vaccine appointment dismissal will occur.
7. Parents or caretakers who don’t agree with the Piedmont Pediatrics vaccine policy will be given a one month grace period to find another pediatric practice.

Our providers welcome discussion about our Piedmont Pediatrics Vaccine Policy with any of our families. We hope you understand that we have devised our policy in order to protect children, their families, and our community from communicable diseases, disability and death by administering safe and effective vaccines in a reasonable, organized, and practical way.

I have read and understand the Piedmont Pediatrics vaccine policy and understand that compliance with these terms is necessary for maintaining a relationship with the practice.

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Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

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Date

