Tuscaloosa Pediatrics Vaccine Policy

We firmly believe in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives.

We firmly believe in the safety of the vaccines we provide.

We firmly believe that all children and adolescents should receive all of the recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

We firmly believe, based on all the 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 only a very few vaccines now, does not cause autism or other developmental disabilities.

We firmly believe that vaccinating children and adolescents may be the most important health-promoting intervention we provide to your child as their pediatrician. The recommended vaccines and the schedule by which they are given are the results of years and years of scientific study and data gathered on millions of children around the world by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.

This being said, we recognize that there has always been and will likely continue to be controversy surrounding vaccination. The vaccine campaign is truly a victim of its own success. It is precisely because vaccines are so effective at preventing illness that many people do not understand the severity of the illnesses we are trying to prevent. Because of vaccines, many people have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis, or even chickenpox. Less than a century ago these illnesses were commonplace and they caused the majority of early infant and childhood deaths. The success of vaccines has led our generation to complacency about vaccinating which can have tragic results.

Over the past two decades, many people in Europe chose not to vaccinate their children with the MMR vaccine due to a fraudulent study suggesting a link between the MMR vaccine and Autism Spectrum Disorder. This resulted in multiple outbreaks of measles in Europe. The results of this study have since been proven false multiple times by numerous follow-up studies. But these outbreaks still occur and they are not without complications including permanent neurologic deficits and several deaths. There is a fatal, progressive disorder called Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis that only occurs 7-10 years after a natural measles infection so consequences may be still to come from these outbreaks.

While Europe and these disease outbreaks may seem a long distance from us in the United States, they are really only a plane ride away. We have had our own outbreaks of measles, mumps, Hemophilus Influenza B meningitis, meningococcal meningitis, and whooping cough in the U.S. in the past few years. These cases have mainly occurred in unvaccinated babies, children, and even adults.

We are making sure you are aware of these facts not to scare or coerce you, but to emphasize the importance of vaccinating your child. We recognize that the decision to vaccinate your child may be a very emotional one for some parents. Should you have doubts, please discuss them with us. Please be advised, however, that delaying or "breaking up the vaccines" to give one or two at a time goes against expert recommendations, and it can put your child at risk for serious illness or death. This goes against our medical advice as physicians at Tuscaloosa Pediatrics.

Should you absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child, you will be asked to find another health care provider who shares your views.

We appreciate the trust you have put in us to care for your children. Thank you for reading this policy. Should you have any questions we will be happy to discuss them during your office visit. We have several handouts available regarding vaccines and the diseases they prevent. We also have links to reliable vaccine information sites on our website www.tuscaloosapeds.com and we encourage you to look closely at those.

The Physicians of Tuscaloosa Pediatrics