



# SOUTHERN ORANGE COUNTY PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

"Great Care for Great Kids!"

## IMMUNIZATION POLICY

***The medical providers at Southern Orange County Pediatric Associates firmly believe that vaccinations are safe, effective, and save lives. As of February 5, 2015 we will no longer accept new patients who do not plan to immunize their children. Existing patients who are not adequately vaccinated are advised to schedule an appointment with a provider to formulate a plan to immunize their children. Existing patients who are not willing to vaccinate are asked to seek health care with another practice.***

We 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 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 their schedule given are the results of years and years of scientific study and data gathering on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.

Every provider at Southern Orange County Pediatric Associates has vaccinated their own children completely and on time, following the schedule recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

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 parents 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. Such an attitude, if it becomes widespread, can only lead to tragic results.

Recently we have been experiencing the consequences of parents not immunizing their children. These consequences have been more pronounced in Southern Orange County, where the vaccination rate is among the lowest in the country. We are beginning to see outbreaks of measles and whooping cough, potentially deadly illnesses that were once nearly eradicated in the United States.

Parents who choose to not immunize or to under-immunize their children not only put their own children at risk, but they also jeopardize the health of our most vulnerable patients. We have patients who are unable to be immunized due to their young age or chronic medical conditions. These children rely on "herd immunity", the protection that is derived from their close contacts receiving their immunizations. When parents choose not to vaccinate their children, they are also putting our most susceptible children at risk.

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 help you understand that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do. However, should you have doubts, please discuss these with your health care provider. In some cases, we may alter the schedule to accommodate parental concerns or reservations so long as the minimum requirements are met. 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, or if you fail to comply with our minimum immunization schedule, we will ask you to find another health care provider who shares your views. Please recognize that by not vaccinating you are putting your child and other children at unnecessary risk for life-threatening illness, disability, and even death.

As medical professionals, we feel very strongly that vaccinating children on schedule with currently available vaccines is absolutely the right thing to do for all children and young adults. 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 our providers.

#### **SOUTHERN ORANGE COUNTY PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES MINIMUM IMMUNIZATION HIGHLIGHTS**

- First MMR (measles/mumps/rubella) received before 18 months.
- First Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine received before 18 months.
- DTaP (diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis) vaccine four doses by 18 months.
- Hib (Haemophilus influenza type B) vaccine four doses by 18 months.
- PCV-13 (Pneumococcal) vaccine four doses by 18 months.
- IPV (inactivated polio) vaccine three doses by 18 months.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Vaccine Education Center (<http://vec.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center>)
- AAP Immunization Safety ([www2.aap.org/immunization](http://www2.aap.org/immunization))
- CDC Immunization Information Page (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>)