

Our Vaccination Policy

All **new** patients accepted into our practice must be immunized following the AAP and CDC recommended guidelines. Additionally, we require that all **established** patients in our practice be immunized following these guidelines as well, with the rare exception of the patients that have underlying medical exemptions or have shown positive antibody titers (immunity) to these diseases.

Vaccine preventable diseases are still a threat to the health and well-being of our children and our community. The resurgence of Measles, Pertussis (whooping cough), Hepatitis A and Polio are excellent reminders that these diseases are still around, in part, because of low immunization rates. In our practice, we have many children who are too young to receive certain vaccines. Additionally, we have many children with underlying chronic illnesses that compromise their immune system and put them at risk of these diseases. This policy is meant to protect not only these children, but also our entire community from vaccine-preventable outbreaks.

Despite the medical evidence and our assurances, a few parents and caregivers continue to be skeptical about giving certain vaccines or giving multiple vaccines at an office visit. In the past, we have tried accommodate our families who want to give fewer vaccines per visit or delay some vaccines. However, this concession has no medical benefit whatsoever. Unfortunately, delaying vaccines dangerously affects the herd immunity of our community and puts children, adolescents, and adults at an increased risk of illness.

Vaccines have been a hot topic among parents, pediatricians, and the media for years. In recent years there has been more news stories about pediatricians who are refusing to care for families who do not vaccinate their children or who do not follow the recommended schedule. The recommended vaccine schedule is a thoroughly studied policy based on the latest scientific studies and input from experts in many fields. Vaccine safety, vaccine effectiveness, and the spread of vaccine-preventable disease in the community are the foundations for the current vaccine policy. As a group, pediatricians aim to reduce childhood suffering from preventable diseases, as well as the spread of these illnesses in our offices. We have a responsibility to protect the health of **all of the children in our practice**, and decrease the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases in our community.

We respect that the parents in our practice have the ultimate responsibility for making decisions about their children's health care, but we must weigh their personal decisions against the available data and the needs of our community. We also feel strongly that **vaccines save lives**. This policy protects our patients and our community from preventable diseases and all the possible repercussions from these diseases in our community.

Therefore, our current vaccine policy reflects the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and CDC. To view these recommendations, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules>.

Other vaccine resources:

US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) 1-888-463-6332 www.fda.gov

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 1-847-434-4000 www.aap.org

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists 1-202-638-5577 www.acog.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) www.cdc.gov

[Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\) www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip)

National Institutes of Health (NIH) 1-301-496-4000 www.nih.gov
[Immunization Action Coalition www.Immunize.org](http://www.Immunize.org)

Vickery Pediatrics' Vaccination Policy as follows:

- 1) **All children must follow the recommended vaccine schedule as set by ACIP/AAP (updated annually) and that are mandated for school entry by the State of Georgia.**
- 2) Hepatitis B is recommended within the first 24 hrs. of life. If not given during the newborn hospital stay, it will be given at the 1 week well child visit.
- 3) **Any previously unvaccinated/under vaccinated children without medical exemptions or positive antibody titers to vaccine-preventable diseases, whose parents still refuse to vaccinate, they will be discharged from our practice.**
- 4) **For new patients who are following an alternate vaccine schedule prior to becoming a patient at Vickery Pediatrics will be required to follow the AAP and CDC catch-up schedule and must stay within the recommended "window" for the administration of vaccines on the "catch-up" schedule. If they do not follow these guidelines, they will be discharged from our practice.**
- 5) The Influenza vaccine is strongly recommended for all children \geq 6 months of age. We strongly recommend it for all children but specifically for those with any underlying chronic illness, chronic respiratory issues and for those with disorders of the immune system. It is not mandatory.
- 6) The Gardasil (HPV) vaccine series is approved and strongly recommended for older children and teens, ideally between the ages of 11-14, but it is not mandatory.

Our providers welcome discussion about Vickery Pediatrics' Vaccine policy with any of our families. We hope that you understand that we have devised our policy to protect children, their families, and our communities from these dreadful diseases by administering safe and effective vaccines in a reasonable, organized and practical way.

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