

## Changes to Vickery Pediatrics' Vaccination Policy

Due to increasing prevalence of vaccine preventable diseases in the US as well as our local community, our providers have decided to further revise our vaccination policy. It has been required that all **new** patients accepted into our practice must be immunized following the AAP and CDC recommended guidelines. However, after much thought and careful consideration, we will now require that all **established** patients in our practice be immunized following the AAP and CDC recommended guidelines as well, with the exception of the few patients that have underlying medical exemptions or have shown positive Antibody titers to these diseases.

Vaccine preventable diseases are still a threat to the health of our children and our community. The resurgence of Measles, Pertussis (whooping cough, Hepatitis A and Polio recently is an excellent reminder 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 as well as many children who have chronic illnesses that compromise their immune system and put them at risk. 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. Additionally, 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 conditions, 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 have to weigh their personal decisions against the available data and the needs of our community. We also feel strongly that vaccines save lives and that this policy protects our patients and our community from preventable diseases and all of 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. Go to --*

*<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules> for these guidelines.*

**Other resources:**

US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) 1-888-463-6332 [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 1-847-434-4000 [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists 1-202-638-5577

[www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

[www.cdc.gov](http://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](http://www.nih.gov)

[Immunization Action Coalition www.Immunize.org](http://www.Immunize.org)

**Vickery Pediatrics' Updated Vaccination Policy as follows:**

- 1) **All children must receive all required vaccines** and following the recommended vaccine schedule by ACIP/AAP (updated annually) 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) All children must utilize the immunization schedule as determined by the AAP and CDC, which is updated annually.
- 4) **For previously unvaccinated/under vaccinated children who are following the AAP and CDC catch-up schedule, they must stay within the recommended “window” for the administration of vaccines or they will be discharged from our practice.**
- 5) **For 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.**
- 6) **For children who are following an alternate vaccine schedule that has been previously agreed to prior to our vaccination policy change 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 or they will be discharged from our practice.**
- 7) The Influenza vaccine is strongly recommended for all children and teens. 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.
- 8) 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.
- 9) Parents or caretakers who don't agree with the Vickery Pediatrics vaccine policy will be given a one month grace period to find another Pediatric practice as required by law.

***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 in order to protect children, their families and our communities from dreadful diseases and potential death by administering safe and effective vaccines in a reasonable, organized and practical way.***

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