



## **Vaccine Policy Statement**

**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 Prevention 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 thimerosal, a preservative that has been in vaccines for decades and remains in some vaccines, does 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 healthcare providers, and that you can perform as parents/caregivers. The recommended vaccines and the vaccine schedule 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.

This said, we recognize that there has always been and will likely always be controversy surrounding vaccination. Indeed, Benjamin Franklin, persuaded by his brother, was opposed to smallpox vaccine until scientific data convinced him otherwise. Tragically, he had delayed inoculating his favorite son Franky. The boy contracted smallpox and died at the age of 4, leaving Franklin with a lifetime of guilt and remorse.

After publication of an unfounded accusation (later retracted) that MMR vaccine caused autism in 1998, many Europeans chose not to vaccinate their children. As a result of under immunization, Europe experienced large outbreaks of measles, with several deaths from disease complications. In 2012, there were more than 48,000 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) in the United States, resulting in 22 deaths. Most victims were infants younger than six months of age. Many children who contracted the illness had parents who made a conscious decision not to vaccinate. In 2015, there was a measles outbreak in Disneyland, California (probably started by an infected park visitor who had traveled from the Philippines). The outbreak eventually spread to 147 people and, again, many were too young to have been vaccinated.

When you don't vaccinate, you take a significant risk with your child's health and the health of others around them. By not vaccinating, you also take selfish advantage of thousands of others who do vaccinate their children, thereby decreasing the likelihood that your child will contract a vaccine preventable disease. We believe that vaccinating is a stand for social responsibility and refusing to vaccinate is self-centered and unacceptable.



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 convince you that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do.

Because we are committed to protecting the health of your children through vaccination, we require all of our patients to be vaccinated. And, we will also give your child/teen an annual influenza vaccination unless they receive it at a school clinic or pharmacy.

***Finally, if you should absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child despite all our efforts, we will ask you to find another healthcare provider who shares your views.*** We do not keep a list of such providers, nor would we recommend any such physician. Please recognize that by not vaccinating, you are putting your child at unnecessary risk for life-threatening illness and disability, and even death. Our patient pool ranges from national-class athletes to children with compromised immune systems. We need to protect them by vaccination our children.

Thank you for taking the time to read this policy. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any one of us. We pride our practice on prevention and anticipatory healthcare and this policy is a testament to our belief.

Lance J. Lazatin, MD

Sandra Gilbert, RN, PNP, BC