

Dear Parents,

We want the greatest health and safety for the children we care for in our practice. Because of this, we have carefully considered our approach to vaccinations. We recognize there has been an increase in the number of parents choosing to not vaccinate, to follow their own schedule, and/or delay vaccination. We also recognize there have been pockets of increased vaccine preventable diseases in the United States, many of which have involved unvaccinated children as a strong component. We are committed to practice medicine in compliance with the evidence based practices established by national advisory organizations that include: the American Academy of Pediatrics, The Centers for Disease Control, and The American Council on Immunization Practices.

It is precisely because vaccines are so effective at preventing illness that we are even discussing whether or not they are given. Because of vaccines, many have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis, or even chicken pox, or known a friend or family member whose child died of one of those diseases. Such success can make us complacent about vaccinating. The thousands of children who ARE vaccinated decrease the likelihood that unvaccinated children will contract one of these diseases. There have already been outbreaks in the last several years of Measles, Hemophilus Influenzae, and Pertussis (Whooping cough). These diseases and the complications that come along with them are very serious, and can cause death.

We will make every effort to provide accurate and meaningful medical and scientific data to support our vaccine policy. We believe in providing all our patients with the same level of care. We also believe it is unethical to deviate from the established standard of care, which would leave vulnerable children susceptible to potentially deadly disease. Our goal is not to scare 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. If you have questions or concerns, we would love to talk to you.

Please recognize that by not vaccinating, we feel you are putting your child at unnecessary risk for life-threatening illness, disability, and even death. Our office is not a good fit for parents who refuse all vaccinations. For ethical reasons, we cannot support any physician's agreement to not immunize a child and therefore we do not keep a list of providers and cannot recommend one. We believe it is medically appropriate to exclude unvaccinated children from a pediatric practice to protect the vaccinated children from communicable infectious diseases. We will work with any family whose child is not up to date with their vaccines to become compliant with current recommendations.

Thank you for your time in reviewing our policy. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with either of us.

Sincerely,

Leigh Ann Grady, MD and Juliette Howes Owens, MD

GROW PEDIATRICS VACCINE POLICY STATEMENT:

We firmly believe in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and save lives. We firmly believe in the safety of our vaccines. We firmly believe that all children and young adults should receive all 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 health care providers, and that you can perform as parents/caregivers. The recommended vaccines and the schedule in which they are 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.

We firmly believe that much of the protection of vaccines comes from herd immunity. Most vaccines produce immunity in 90-95% of children. The remaining 5-10% who do not produce immunity are protected from herd immunity, meaning that a highly vaccinated population limits the spread of most infections. As more people choose not to vaccinate, herd immunity is eroded. Now more than ever, it is important to protect parents who choose to vaccinate their children from those who do not vaccinate.