

## **Vitae Family Care Clinic Vaccination Policy**

**We firmly believe** in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives.

**We firmly believe** in the safety of vaccines.

**We firmly believe** that all children and young adults should receive all the recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the Center 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 a few 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. 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 they should be given. Because of vaccines, many of you have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis, or even chickenpox, or known a friend or family member whose child has died of one of these diseases. Such success can make us complacent about vaccinating.

But such an attitude, if it becomes widespread, can only lead to tragic results. 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. 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 advantage of thousands of others who do vaccinate their children, thereby decreasing the likelihood that your child will contract a vaccine-preventable disease.

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. However, should you have doubts, please discuss these with your healthcare provider in advance of your visit. Please be advised that delaying or “breaking up the vaccines” to give one or two at a time over two or more visits goes against expert recommendations and can put your child at risk for serious illness (or even death) and goes against our medical advice as providers at Vitae Family Care Clinic. Also, know that delaying vaccines to an older age puts your child at increased risk for reaction to the vaccines.

Because we are committed to protecting the health of your children, and all our other patients, through vaccination, we will no longer be accepting patients who choose not to vaccinate their child. Infants will begin all age-appropriate recommended vaccines by three months of age, with additional doses at most well child visits until the age of two. Children will receive additional recommended booster doses between the age of 4-6 and preteens will be given recommended booster doses at 11-12. We will complete 16-year teen vaccinations before each child’s 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Finally, if you should absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child despite our efforts, we will ask you to find another healthcare provider for your family in the next 30 calendar days. Please complete a records release form on our website and mail or e-mail this request to our office so we can forward your child’s records to their new provider. Please recognize that by not vaccinating, you are putting your child at unnecessary risk for life-threatening illness and disability, and even death.

As medical professionals, we feel very strongly that vaccinating your child on schedule with currently available vaccines is absolutely the right thing to do to protect all children and young adults. Thank you for taking the time to read this policy. We would like to discuss any questions or concerns that you have about vaccines with you. If your child is not currently up to date, and you have questions about how to bring your child up to date on their vaccines, or if you have other questions regarding this policy, please contact our office to set up a consult.

Vitae Family Care Clinic Staff