



## Old Harding Pediatric Associates' 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.

Modern vaccination 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 or not 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 died of one of these diseases. Such success can make us complacent about vaccinating.

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 feel that 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 educate and reassure 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 some cases, we may alter the schedule to accommodate parental concerns or reservations. Please be advised, however, 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 physicians at Old Harding Pediatrics Associates.

Finally, if you should absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child despite all our efforts, we will ask you to find another healthcare provider. 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. 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. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any of the physicians in our practice.

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