

Vaccine Policy Statement

I firmly believe that vaccinating children and young adults may be the single most important health-promoting intervention I perform as a doctor. The recommended vaccine schedule is the result of years and years of scientific study and data gathering on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.

I recognize that there has always been controversy surrounding vaccination. Indeed, Benjamin Franklin, persuaded by his brother, was opposed to smallpox vaccine. Tragically, he had delayed inoculating his son Franky, who contracted smallpox and died at the age of 4. Quoting Mr. Franklin's autobiography:

In 1736, I lost one of my sons, a fine boy of four years old, by the smallpox...I long regretted bitterly, and still regret that I had not given it to him by inoculation. This I mention for the sake of parents who omit that operation, on the supposition that they should never forgive themselves if a child died under it, my example showing that the regret may be the same either way, and that, therefore, the safer should be chosen.

It is because vaccines are so effective at preventing illness that we are even discussing whether or not they should be given. Because of vaccines, most of us have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis or even chickenpox. Such success can make us complacent about vaccinating.

Vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disabilities. Thimerosal, a preservative that has been in vaccines for decades, does not cause autism or other developmental disabilities.

Over the past several years, many people in Europe have chosen not to vaccinate their children with the MMR vaccine after publication of an unfounded suspicion (later retracted) that the vaccine caused autism. As a result of under immunization, there have been outbreaks of measles resulting in hundreds of deaths from complications of measles in Europe.

I am making you aware of these facts to emphasize the importance of vaccinating your child. I recognize that the choice may be a very emotional one for some parents. I will do everything I can to convince you that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do. In some cases, I 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 my medical advice.** Please realize that you will be required to sign a “Refusal to Vaccinate” acknowledgment in the event of lengthy delays.

I feel very strongly that vaccinating children on schedule with currently available vaccines is absolutely the right thing to do for all children and young adults. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with me.

Sincerely,

Daniel May, MD FAAP