

Woburn & North Andover Pediatric Associates

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January 2009

Dear Parents,

Due to recent questions and concerns about vaccines, our practice would like to explain why we believe vaccines are vital to the care of children and adolescents. We strongly believe, based on all of the current literature, evidence, and studies, that vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disabilities. There is a great deal of scientific evidence that refutes any connection between autism and thimerosal, a preservative that has been used in vaccines for decades. Thimerosal was removed from U.S. vaccines between 1999 and 2001 and this had no effect on the rate of autism in this country. Despite the vast amount of misinformation that has been presented in the media and online, there is no evidence to support a link to vaccines.

On the other hand, there is very solid research and experience that shows us the benefit of immunizing babies and children. In a sense, the overwhelming success of our immunization programs has become their worst enemy. Thanks to our modern vaccines, most parents in this generation have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, pertussis, or bacterial meningitis. They have never comforted a friend or family member whose child died from one of these diseases. They have not needed to care for a child with a lifelong disability as a result of a vaccine-preventable disease. When the danger of these diseases does not seem imminent, we may question the need to protect ourselves against them. The bacteria and viruses that cause these diseases still exist and in some parts of the world they are still very active. Unvaccinated children are at risk for diseases that can be brought to the United States by people visiting other countries or U.S. travelers returning from these countries. In recent years there have been outbreaks of mumps, measles, and pertussis in the U.S. that caused significant illness in unimmunized people.

We strongly believe that all children should follow the recommended schedule of core immunizations published by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics. We do not believe that parents should delay vaccinating their own children based on the belief that the risk of disease is low, since everyone else is vaccinated. From a public health and safety perspective, it's easy to see where this logic fails. We cannot, with a clear conscience, practice in a way that puts our patients and communities at risk.

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We recognize that this topic is important to you and that it can be confusing because of all the different sources of information competing for your attention and trust. We present this data in the hope that it will help you make an informed decision about your child's health. We will be happy to provide you with more information about vaccine safety or answer questions about individual vaccines or diseases, and you should never hesitate to ask your primary care provider questions about any topic. However, we ask that those who disagree with full vaccination according to the recommended schedule find another pediatric office that shares their views. Please let our staff know if you need assistance transitioning to another office and we appreciate your time and consideration in reading this policy.

Sincerely,

Woburn & North Andover Pediatric Associates

Information for Parents:
www.aap.org
www.cdc.gov/vaccines
www.cispimmunize.org
www.vaccinateyourbaby.org
“Autism’s False Prophets”, by Dr. Paul Offit