

Sewickley Valley Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine
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Sewickley Valley Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine 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 Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

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 their schedule 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 recognize that there has always been and will likely always be controversy surrounding vaccination. Benjamin Franklin, persuaded by his brother, was opposed to smallpox vaccine until scientific data convinced him otherwise. Tragically, he had delayed vaccinating his son who contracted smallpox and died at the age of 4, leaving Ben with a lifetime of guilt and remorse.

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 or even lazy about vaccinating. But such an attitude, if it becomes widespread, can only lead to tragic results.

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 small outbreaks of measles and several deaths from complications of measles in Europe over the past several years. Measles and Mumps are on the rise now in America as well.

There is, of course, benefit to your child when responsible parents have their children vaccinated, because it decreases the spread of these illnesses. That may decrease the likelihood of your child being infected, but it certainly doesn't prevent infection with these serious diseases.

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 help you to understand that vaccinating your child according to the schedule is the right thing to do. **However, should you have doubts, please discuss these with your health care 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 providers at Sewickley Valley Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine.

As medical professionals, we 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.

Thank you for taking the time to read this policy and please feel free to discuss any questions or concern you may have about vaccines with any one of us.

Sincerely,

SVPAM Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, and Physician Assistant

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