



## **Our Vaccination Philosophy**

As healthcare professionals, we believe in the importance of vaccinating all children according to the schedules recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). These schedules, continuously researched and updated by experts in medicine, immunology, and public health, represent the ideal model for immunization both nationally and globally. The recommended vaccines have been thoroughly studied and proven to be safe and effective in preventing diseases and saving lives. We firmly consider vaccination to be the most crucial intervention we perform.

## **Addressing Vaccine Controversy**

There has always been some level of suspicion and controversy around vaccines. The scientific principles behind vaccination can be challenging for healthcare providers to explain and for parents to grasp. Conflicting information can be overwhelming, and we ask that you trust us as your interpreters of this complex science.

Vaccines are often victims of their own success; they work so well that the diseases they prevent have become rare, which can make the importance of completing the immunization series seem less critical. We understand the difficulty of seeing children endure multiple needle sticks, but extensive research assures us that administering multiple vaccines at once is not overwhelming to the immune system. In fact, our immune systems handle far more challenges daily than what vaccines present. Additionally, there is no evidence linking vaccines to autism or other developmental disabilities. Thimerosal, a mercury-based preservative in a few multi-dose vaccines, has never been shown to be toxic or to cause or exacerbate neurological conditions, including autism. These conclusions are widely accepted in the scientific community and are based on ongoing research.

## **Risks of Under-Vaccination and Alternative Schedules**

Under-vaccination has led to outbreaks of pertussis and measles, both of which can result in hospitalization or death but are preventable with vaccines administered according to the CDC's schedule. Delaying or spacing out vaccines increases the time during which children are vulnerable to infections and necessitates more office visits, which can be traumatic and increase exposure to illnesses.

This issue extends beyond individual health to public health. Delaying or avoiding vaccines endangers other children, including those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons and infants too young to be vaccinated.

## Vaccine Resources

We recognize that deciding to vaccinate can be emotional. We are committed to helping you feel comfortable with following the CDC's vaccine schedules. If you have doubts, please discuss them with our staff or your primary care provider. We recommend the following resources:

- The Panic Virus, a book by Seth Mnookin, an investigative reporter and father.
- CDC: For Parents: Vaccines for Your Children – A useful resource about vaccines designed for parents.
- AAP: Immunization – Information on vaccines and preventable diseases.
- CDC: Recommended Routine Vaccination Schedule: Ages 0-6 & Ages 7-18
- CDC: Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) – Information sheets produced by the CDC
- CHOP: Vaccine Education Center – The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’s Vaccine Education Center

## Our Vaccination Policy

We, the healthcare providers at Celebration Pediatrics, require adherence to the CDC's vaccination schedule for all children under our care. We will not accept new families who choose not to vaccinate into our practice. Undecided families are welcome, but must commit to the vaccination schedule within two months for newborns. Older children entering our practice without proper immunization will have a one-month grace period after an appointment to discuss vaccines; if they are not vaccinated per the CDC catch-up schedule after this period, we will ask you to find another provider.

Established patients behind on vaccines will also have a one-month grace period to decide on vaccination, followed by adherence to a written plan based on the CDC catch-up schedule. Failure to follow this plan will result in us requesting you find another healthcare provider.

We recommend the annual influenza vaccine, Hepatitis A, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), and both Meningococcal vaccines (MenACWY & Men B) for all age appropriate patients, though refusal of any of the above mentioned vaccines will not lead to discharge from our practice.

If you cannot adhere to our vaccination policy, we ask you to find a healthcare provider who aligns with your views. We do not keep a list of such providers nor recommend any.

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Patient DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: This policy does not apply to patients with accepted medical contraindications for specific vaccines.**