

IMMUNIZATION

The pediatricians in our group firmly believe that vaccines save lives. The scientific research on vaccines consistently supports their safety and effectiveness. The benefits are to prevent complications, disability, hospitalization and death from the diseases that we vaccinate against.

We understand there is a lot of information available about vaccines ranging from scientific articles to compelling stories. Although there are many who put forth scientific-sounding ideas that might question vaccines, high-quality research consistently demonstrates the great value and safety of vaccines in preventing disease. Children who get vaccine-preventable diseases and their complications generally fall into two categories: children who are not vaccinated and children who are around others who are not vaccinated. The immune system is very capable of handling the components of recommended vaccines. Unfortunately, the immune system is not always as capable of managing the actual infections that we are trying to prevent.

Due to many advances, vaccines are safer than ever before. For those concerned about what seems to be an increasing number of vaccines since their childhood, it is important to understand that more diseases can now be prevented with actually fewer side effects. Many adults a generation ago received over ten times the amount of antigens in a single DTP (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis) vaccine compared to the total amount from all the vaccines that most children will receive during their entire childhood. Likewise, there are thousands of proteins in a single germ that children are exposed to daily; whereas, there are often only a few key proteins in each vaccine. In the past decade, combination vaccines have allowed the ability to deliver vaccines safer than ever with fewer overall injections.

Although there are strong stories about children with illnesses that may coincide with vaccination, the research has consistently shown that there is no proven link between vaccines and problems with health and neurodevelopment. Although less common than just a few decades ago, there are still tragic stories in the United States of children suffering

severe and permanent effects or dying from an infection that was vaccine-preventable. Our group is certain that as the number of people who refuse to vaccinate increases, we will see an increase in preventable consequences including meningitis, deafness, paralysis, pneumonia, hospitalization, cancer, brain damage and death. We have already seen this starting to happen with measles and pertussis.

Recently Pediatric Associates implemented a policy by which we will no longer be able to care for families who have made a conscious decision to not vaccinate. Be assured that this decision was not arrived lightly and was made in order to provide the highest quality of care for our patients in the safest environment possible. In spite of this policy change we would like to give you ample opportunity to reflect on your decision and be educated to our stance on the importance and safety of vaccines. For more information please see our immunization page.