



Vaccine Policy Statement

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 your time in reading this policy, and please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any one of the physicians.

The vaccination campaign is truly a victim of its own success. It is precisely because vaccines are so effective at preventing illness that we are even able to discuss whether or not they should be given. Because of vaccines, many 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 about vaccinating.

After Publication of an unfounded finding (later retracted) that MMR vaccine caused autism in 1998, many people in Europe chose not to vaccinate their children. As a result of under immunization, there were large outbreaks of measles, with several deaths from complications of the disease. In 2010 there were more than 3000 cases of whooping cough in California, with 9 deaths in children less than six months of age. Again, many of those who contracted the illness (and then passed it on to the infants, who were too young to have been fully vaccinated) had made a decision not to vaccinate.

Furthermore, by not vaccinating your child you are taking advantage of thousands of others who do vaccinate their children, which decreases the likelihood that your child will contract one of these diseases. And needlessly put children with weakened immune systems at risk for life threatening diseases.

We are making you aware of the facts not to scare you or coerce you, but to emphasize the importance of vaccinating your child. We recognize that the choice may be an emotional one for some parents. We will do everything we can to reassure you that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do. However, **should you have doubts, please discuss these with your healthcare provider in advance of your visit.** 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 of serious illness (or even death) and goes against our best medical advice as the providers at French Broad Pediatrics.**

Furthermore, please realize that you will be required to sign a “Refusal to Vaccinate” acknowledgement in the event of any change in the recommended vaccines.

All patients in the practice are required to receive a minimum of DTap, Hib, Polio, and Pneumococcal vaccines by three months of age, all AAP-recommended immunizations by two years of age, and meningococcal vaccine and booster doses of Tdap and Varicella vaccines by age 12 years. Any changes to this policy require a prior approval by the managing partner.

Finally, if you should absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child, we will ask you to find another healthcare provider who shares your views. We do not keep a list of such providers, nor would we recommend any such physician. Please recognize that by not vaccinating you are putting your child at unnecessary risk for life-threatening illness and disability, and even death.

- We 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 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics

- 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 has been in vaccines for decades and remains in some vaccines given to older children, does not cause autism or other developmental disabilities.
- We firmly believe that vaccinating children and young adults may be the single most 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 scientist and physicians.