

# Red Wheelbarrow Pediatrics Vaccine Policy

Red Wheelbarrow Pediatrics firmly believes in the effectiveness and safety of vaccines, and that all children and 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. The large body of scientific evidence overwhelmingly disproves the notion that vaccines cause autism or any other developmental disability, and the recommended schedule of vaccines is the product of decades of scientific study and data gathered on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.

We are fortunate to live in a time and place in which diseases like polio, measles, tetanus, and bacterial meningitis are rarely seen. But this fact, unfortunately, has led many people to become complacent about the importance of vaccines in preventing serious illness. Make no mistake, these diseases still exist, and if enough people choose not to vaccinate their children, it will not take long for the diseases to establish a foothold once again. As an example, in 2010 there were more than 3000 cases of whooping cough in California, with nine deaths in children less than six months of age. There have also been increasing measles outbreaks, with a peak of 667 case in the U.S. in 2014. Because of this, we feel that following the recommended vaccine schedule is the right thing to do for your child and for the public good.

We understand that many people find the decision to vaccinate their children to be a difficult one, especially given the breadth of misinformation that is available. We encourage those people, and all parents, to educate themselves using reliable sources from the CDC and the AAP.

In an effort to provide care to all children, including those whose parents were anxious about vaccines, our practice has allowed some parents to use a “delayed” schedule, but only with the understanding that their children would fall no more than a few months behind in their recommended vaccines. We have found, however, that once these small allowances are permitted, it might imply to some people that it is acceptable to delay vaccines even further or to not vaccinate at all. We no longer want to make those implications. We would like to be absolutely clear that lengthy delays or skipping vaccines is not acceptable.

Red Wheelbarrow Pediatrics has a responsibility to our patient community and the larger community outside of our office. We have the responsibility to protect any children who have a weakened immunity due to illness or chemotherapy, who are too young to receive certain vaccines, who have diseases that prevent them from being vaccinated, whose immune systems might not provide full immunity despite being vaccinated, or whose family members might be at risk for vaccine-preventable diseases.

Therefore, we will be instituting the following policies regarding vaccines:

- Routine vaccinations will only be given at well visits and at the recommended times, unless there is a valid medical reason for a delay.
- We will not “split” or “space out” vaccines.
- Parents who do not follow these policies will be asked to find another pediatrician who shares their views. We do not keep a list of such providers, nor would we recommend any such physician.
- Current patients who have been following a delayed schedule can continue to do so, provided they do not fall more than 6 months behind schedule.