

Candlewood Valley Pediatrics

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 Centers for Disease Control and American Academy of Pediatrics.

We firmly believe that vaccinating children and young adults may be the single most important health-promoting intervention we perform as healthcare providers, and that you can perform as parents/caregivers. The recommended vaccines and the vaccine schedule 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.

The vaccine campaign is truly a victim of its own success. It is precisely because vaccines are so effective at preventing illness that we are even discussing whether or not they should be given. 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. After publication of an unfounded accusation (later retracted) that MMR vaccine caused autism in 1998, many Europeans chose to not vaccinate their children. As a result of underimmunization, Europe experienced large outbreaks of measles, with several deaths from disease complications. In 2012, there were more than 48,000 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) in the United States, resulting in 22 deaths. Most victims were infants younger than six months of age. Many children who contracted the illness had parents who made a conscious decision to not vaccinate. In 2015, there was a measles outbreak in Disneyland, California (probably started by an infected park visitor who had traveled from the Philippines). The outbreak eventually spread to 147 people, and again, many were too young to have been vaccinated.

When you don't vaccinate, you take a significant risk with your child's health and the health of others around them. By not vaccinating, you also take selfish advantage of thousands of others who do vaccinate their children, thereby decreasing the likelihood that your child will contract a vaccine-preventable disease. We feel that refusing to vaccinate is self-centered and unacceptable.

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 convince you that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do. However, **should you have doubts**, 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 CVP.** Such additional visits will require additional copays on your part. Please realize that you will also be required to sign a “Refusal to Vaccinate” acknowledgement in the event of lengthy delays. Refusal to sign the declaration form is a basis for dismissal from the practice.

***** We follow the recommended immunization schedule for the American Academy of Pediatrics. We require all of our patients to be up to date with vaccines at the following ages: 2 years, 6 years, and 13 years. *****

As a prospective new patient of the practice, you will be asked for your child’s vaccine record prior to being seen for any visit. If your child is unvaccinated, and you are unwilling to vaccinate, we ask you to find a different practice more in line with your philosophy.

Finally, if you should absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child despite all our efforts, 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.

As medical professionals, we feel very strongly that vaccinating your child on schedule with currently available vaccines is absolutely the right thing to do to protect all children and young adults. Thank you for taking the time to read this policy. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any of us.