



## Dekalb Pediatric Center

### Vaccine Policy Statement 2/6/2019, **Updated 06/20/2024**

Dear Parents,

Our goal at Dekalb Pediatric Center is to provide high quality, evidence based, comprehensive care to our patients. An important component of that care is providing vaccinations against life threatening diseases, following the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). We'd like to take this opportunity to update our policy and affirm our position on this important part of your child's health care.

Our Position:

- 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 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 vaccinating children and young adults may be the single most important health-promoting intervention we perform as health care providers, and that you can perform as parents/caregivers. The recommended vaccines, given on the recommended schedule are the result of years and years of scientific study and data gathering on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.
- We believe that the vaccine campaign is truly a victim of its own success. It is precisely because vaccines are so effective at preventing illness that some question whether they should be given. Because of vaccines, many of you have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, 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, as proven by recent outbreaks.

Our Policy:

- We adhere to the AAP immunization guidelines <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/immunizations/Pages/Immunization-Schedule.aspx> and follow the schedule that is attached and available on our website [www.dekalbpeds.com](http://www.dekalbpeds.com) and patient portal.

- Children followed in our practice must receive all vaccines recommended by the AAP that are mandated for school entry in the state of Georgia.
- The immunization series begins at the 2month visit. All infants (without a medical reason) must begin receiving their vaccines at 2 months of age. If a parent is not comfortable beginning to immunize at 2 months, we will provide a dismissal letter giving 30 days' notice to transfer care.
- At times parents have requested to alter the vaccine schedule by spreading out vaccines due to their concerns or reservations. Although we do not agree with this approach, we will allow you to sign a vaccine refusal/deferment form and space out the vaccines due at a given age over the time period until the next set of vaccines are due. For example, if you choose to space out the vaccines due at 2 months of age your child must receive all of those vaccines before the 4-month visit.
- 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, can put your child at risk for serious illness (or even death) and goes against our medical advice as providers at Dekalb Pediatric Center. To ensure that the correct vaccines are ordered and to avoid any possible errors when our routine schedule is not followed, all such additional visits will be scheduled as an office visit with one of our providers. This will most often require a co-pay (or deductible) on your part.

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. Attached is the recommended schedule and some web sites you may visit for additional information. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any of us.

Sincerely,

Melinda Willingham, MD  
 Deborah Pollack, MD  
 Rebecca Kolesky, MD  
 Melinda Shelton, MD  
 Andrew Godfrey-Kittle, MD  
 Tiffany Mangal, MD

Hannah Addis, CPNP  
 Mallory Gray, CPNP  
 Caroline Zirbel, CPNP  
 Sara Holmes, CPNP