

Dear Parent:

In compliance with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) I am recommending that you immunize your child. In this packet you will find all information pertinent for recommended immunizations for children between the ages of 0-6 years. Included is also a recommended immunization schedule. Please take the time to carefully review the enclosed information before each scheduled well visit.

Lately there have been concerns with regard to the number and safety of immunizations. Please remember that the introduction of vaccines into our healthcare system has made many contagious, sometimes deadly diseases preventable. At present, vaccine-preventable disease levels are at, or near record lows. However there is concern that for different reasons there is still an under-immunized segment in our society among children, adolescents and adults resulting in increasing outbreaks of disease such as whooping cough (Pertussis). As a pediatrician I consider it part of my job to play a role in the war against preventable disease and to immunize when appropriate. I understand that as a parent you may have fears and concerns with regards to immunizations which I want you to feel comfortable discussing with me. Ultimately you need to understand the facts, make an informed decision and give consent to the administration of any vaccine.

To help you in your decision making you should know the following:

- 1) We participate in the Florida Health Department's Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Therefore, if your insurance does not have immunization coverage you qualify to receive vaccine through this program. (An administration fee will still apply).
- 2) If the number of shots (needle pricks) given at a visit concerns you, you should be aware that we have in stock combination vaccines which would decrease the number of sticks your child could receive. Pediarix, for example includes the Dtap, Hepatitis B and IPV (polio). One shot could be given instead of three.
- 3) If the amount of antigen your child receives at a visit concerns you I have come up with an alternative immunization schedule that would break up the schedule and still allow you to complete the primary series by the recommended 2 years of age. Variations on the schedule can be discussed. Bear in mind however, that the spreading out of the vaccine schedule will require more visits to the office and possible out of pocket expense on your behalf if your insurance is the kind that will only allow for a certain number of visits.
- 4) If you opt not to immunize or to delay immunization we will ask you to sign a refusal to vaccine form which states that you understand the purposes, risks and benefits of the recommended vaccine and the possible consequences of not receiving that vaccine. Though you have signed this document, by law, I am required to periodically revisit your option to immunize or not.

I realize that this is a lot of information and hope it is not overwhelming. My desire is to provide as much evidence-based information and options that will help us partner together in the care and well being of your child. In this packet I have also included a letter from the president of the American Academy of Pediatrics. For more information please visit the AAP and CDC websites at www.aap.org and www.cdc.gov/vaccines respectively.

Sincerely,

Patricia Elvir, M.D. F.A.A.P.