



HPA Vaccine Policy

We at Holyoke Pediatric Associates firmly believe that fully vaccinating your child as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Disease Control Advisory Committee for Immunization Practice (ACIP) may be the most important thing that we, as healthcare providers and you, as parents can do to protect the health of your child. We strive to decrease any discomfort and anxiety that children may have during vaccine administration as much as possible.

All of our providers strongly believe that routine childhood vaccinations are very safe and that the current vaccination schedule is based on decades of extensive research. Therefore **we will not take care of children whose parents/guardians completely refuse all vaccines. We also firmly discourage following alternative vaccine schedules.** Alternative vaccine schedules do not make vaccines any safer than they already are. In fact, following an alternative schedule or spreading vaccines out beyond the recommended schedule puts children at greater risk of becoming sick with certain viral and bacterial diseases because they are not receiving the vaccines when they are most vulnerable. Children who do not receive the recommended scheduled vaccines are not getting the medical care they deserve which places them, other patients in our office and our community in general at unnecessary risk for serious, preventable illnesses.

In this internet age, information comes from many directions. Parents may read different information and opinions regarding vaccines and their safety. It can be a bit confusing, overwhelming and hard to decide what information is reliable. We are happy to guide you to and provide you with information about vaccines that you can trust.

Routine childhood vaccinations have been so successful in preventing disease that many people are no longer familiar with these serious and often life-threatening illnesses. This has led to parents becoming more frightened of the vaccine itself rather than the actual disease. We have seen these diseases, know what they can do to your child and feel very strongly that it is our duty to protect our patients by immunizing them completely.

We have reviewed all of the issues regarding vaccine safety/effectiveness and the controversies regarding possible side effects. Below, you will find links to reliable resources you can trust. We encourage you to review them and discuss any questions or concerns you have with your child's provider. Let us help you to protect your children by vaccinating them fully.

Helpful Immunization Resources

- Centers for Disease Control Vaccine & Immunization <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html>
- American Academy of Pediatrics Immunization <https://www.healthychildren.org/english/safety-prevention/immunizations/pages/default.aspx>
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Vaccine Education website. (This is a great resource for families and discusses the many benefits of vaccination, known side effects, and the many controversies surrounding vaccination.) <http://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center>
- Immunization Action Coalition www.immunize.org
- Vaccines for Teens <http://www.vaccineinformation.org/teens/>
- *The Panic Virus* by Seth Mnookin: a passionate, logical and comprehensive argument for vaccines in the face of autism fears