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VACCINE POLICY STATEMENT

We firmly believe in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives, and have complete confidence in the safety of vaccines. **We believe that all children and young adults should receive the recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics.**

We feel certain 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 childhood immunization schedule is the result of years of scientific study and data on millions of children by thousands of the brightest scientists and physicians.

These things being said, we recognize that there has been and may always be controversy surrounding vaccination. In many ways, the vaccine campaign is 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 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. Over the past several years, many people in Europe have chosen not to vaccinate their children with the MMR vaccine after publication of an unfounded suspicion (later retracted) that the vaccine caused autism. As a result of under immunization, there have been outbreaks of vaccine preventable illnesses such as measles and pertussis in the United States.

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 inform you of the benefits of vaccinating your child. Should you have doubts, please discuss these with your health care provider in advance of your 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, and can put your child at risk for serious illness (or even death) from preventable illnesses.

Finally, if you should decide that you do not want to vaccinate your child according to our recommendations, we will ask you to find another health care provider who shares your views. As medical professionals, we could not feel more strongly that vaccinating children on schedule with currently available vaccines is in the best interest for all children and young adults. Thank you for your time in reading this policy, and please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with one of our providers. (with permission from Middleton Pediatrics.)