

Announcement from the Physicians at CMU Health

From the clinical experts at CMU Health:

- **We firmly believe** in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives and in the safety of our vaccines.
- **We firmly believe** that all children and young adults should receive all recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services.
- **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 thimerosal, a preservative that has been in vaccines for decades and remains in some vaccines, does 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 healthcare providers, and that you can perform as parents/caregivers. The recommended vaccines and the vaccine schedule are the result of years and years of scientific study and data gathered on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.

As such, the clinical experts at CMU Health expect:

- **Because we are committed to protecting the health of your children through vaccination, we require all our patients to be vaccinated.** Infants will receive all age-appropriate recommended vaccines by three months of age, with additional recommended vaccines as well as booster doses by two years of age. Children will receive additional recommended booster doses by the time they are seven years old, and will be given recommended 11–12-year preteen vaccinations by the time they are 13 years old. We will complete 16-year teen vaccinations before each child's 17th birthday. **And, we will also give your child/teen an annual influenza vaccination unless they receive it at a school clinic or pharmacy.**

If you should refuse to vaccinate your child despite our efforts or fail to comply with the expert-recommended schedule, we will ask you to find another health care provider who shares your views. Please recognize that by not vaccinating, you are putting your child at unnecessary risk for life-threatening illness and disability, and even death.

Vaccine Effectiveness

The global 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, most in America 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.

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 not to vaccinate their children. As a result of under-immunization, 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 not to 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 do not 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 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 assure you that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do.

Wherever you choose to receive your care, please be aware 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 CMU Health.

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 our providers.