

Merrimack Valley Pediatrics

Immunization Statement

The providers at Merrimack Valley Pediatrics strongly endorse universal immunization for all children. Immunizations help protect your child against very serious infectious diseases. Immunizations are responsible for preventing 3 million deaths in children each year worldwide. The viruses and bacteria that cause vaccine-preventable disease still exist in this country and through out the world and can be passed on to people who are not protected by vaccines.

Before vaccines, parents in the United States could expect that every year:

- Measles to cause death or brain damage in 1- 2 of every 1000 cases.
- Polio would paralyze 10,000 children.
- Rubella would cause birth defects and mental retardation in as many as 20,000 newborns.
- Diptheria would be one of the most common causes of death in school-aged children.
- Pertussis (whooping cough) would kill thousands of infants.

There are many misconceptions about vaccines. In our long experience giving immunizations, we have seen very few side effects from vaccines and have seen a marked decrease in vaccine preventable diseases. Childhood immunizations given by our office are thimerisol or mercury free. We believe that a child is far more likely to be seriously injured by one of these diseases than by a vaccine.

Carefully performed studies clearly disprove the notion that autism is caused by the vaccines. Today more children are diagnosed with Autism. This increase in Autism rates is partly due to a broadening of the definition of the disease to include Asperger's syndrome, autistic spectrum disorder and pervasive developmental delay. As an office we monitor children for Autism at each well child exam and by a screening questionnaire at their 18 month exam.

We understand as both healthcare providers and parents that there is a lot of information available about the pros and cons of immunizing your child. We would like to help you make an informed decision about protecting your child.

We suggest that you refer to the following web sites for more information.

www.CDC.gov/vaccines/

www.AAP.org/healthtopics/immunizations.cfm

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