

Vaccine Position Statement

At Duke Primary Care:

*We firmly believe in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives.

*We firmly believe in the safety of vaccines.

*We feel strongly that all infants, children and young adults should receive all of the recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Because of vaccines, many of you have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis, or even chicken pox, or known a friend or family member whose child was permanently disabled or died from one of these diseases. Such success may make people question the importance of vaccines. The vaccine campaign is a victim of its own success. It is precisely because vaccines are so effective at preventing illness that we are even having these discussions today. Unfortunately, there are more parents/guardians who have recently experienced the consequences of not vaccinating their children, or of being exposed to unvaccinated children in the community, sometimes with tragic results.

While we recognize and respect the parents'/guardians' role as the ultimate decision maker for their child's healthcare, we believe strongly that we are obligated to deliver the best and safest healthcare possible for our patients and our community. These vaccine-preventable diseases can and do cause severe illness, including seizures, brain damage, deafness, permanent developmental disabilities, paralysis, and even death.

We at Duke Primary Care are dedicated to providing the best care that we can for our patients. We feel to do this effectively we must enter into a partnership based on mutual trust with the parents/guardians of our patients so that together we can achieve this goal. Recently, there has been a trend of misinformation and resulting fear of vaccine side effects by well-meaning parents. The recommended vaccines and their given schedules are the result of years of scientific study and data on millions of children. This body of research overwhelmingly shows that vaccines are safe and effective in protecting our children and communities from serious diseases.

Vaccinating infants, children and young adults may be the single most important health-promoting intervention we perform as health care providers and one of the most important health interventions a parent/guardian can do on behalf of their children. We want all of our patients to benefit from this modern lifesaving tool and are happy to discuss this further, working together to ensure the most optimal health for your child. It is the position of Duke Primary Care to vaccinate all of its patient population, as many families are legitimately concerned that unvaccinated persons put their families at risk. If you choose not to vaccinate, we strongly encourage you to establish care with a provider who shares your vaccination philosophy.