

In 2000, measles was eradicated from the USA due to widespread immunization against the disease. In 2019 there was a resurgence of measles in multiple states with cases reaching over 1000. This should not have happened!

The MMR vaccine has been proven safe and effective. Research conducted all over the world has not shown a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. The initial study that raised this concern only included 12 children and was found to be fraudulent and scientifically invalid. The study was retracted and the doctor who published it lost his license to practice. Furthermore, in June 2019 there was an outbreak of Hepatitis A in Arizona. This virus is also a vaccine preventable disease, which is present in the feces of an infected person and spread by unwashed hands.

Phoenix Pediatrics believes that the current vaccine schedule is in the best interest of all of our patients. This schedule is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Center for Disease Control, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and American Academy of Family Physicians. It is based on specific infection risk at different ages and is supported by extensive medical research that the benefits far outweigh any risks. Additionally, there is no scientific data supporting an alternative vaccination schedule.

Phoenix Pediatrics is nationally known for our expertise in treating children with special needs. Some of these children could be placed at risk because of exposure to an unvaccinated child who could bring a vaccine preventable infectious disease into our office.

At Phoenix Pediatrics we understand and respect the fact that all parents love their children and want to make the best possible decisions regarding their care. All of our own children and grandchildren have been fully vaccinated. As pediatricians, we have an obligation to protect all of our patients from vaccine preventable diseases, particularly those with special needs who are at greatest risk. We believe that there is a social responsibility to ensure 'herd immunity', where we all benefit from enough people being immunized in the community. Now that a minority of people is choosing not to vaccinate, we are all at risk again as evidenced by the outbreaks in 2019. After a great deal of thought and discussion, we have made the decision to no longer continue to treat children who are not vaccinated. Several other reputable practices in Phoenix have already made the same decision.

Practical Implementation:

- Our schedulers have been instructed to inform new patients who are not immunizing at all, to choose another practice.
- For those who want to catch up on vaccines that have been delayed in the past, we will allow 12 months to get caught up.

- We will allow parents to do a *delayed schedule*, at the parents' direction. HOWEVER, we do not endorse this approach. An '*alternative schedule*' will allow for some choice, but we ask parents to please communicate those specifics about your schedule to our staff.
 - Delayed vaccines result in higher risk of disease for the child.
 - It also results in more visits that require giving a vaccine. This is tough on babies and they learn quickly that visits to the doctor can be unpleasant.
 - There can be confusion for daycares, schools and parents trying to maintain their alternative schedule. We often see parents who are upset about missed vaccines when schools are not letting their child in as they are not up to date, only to find that they had refused a vaccine that should have been given in the past.
 - Additional visits also result in greater expense as vaccines given on different dates create new 'Dates of Service' and the applicable co-pay with some insurance.
- Our practice requires that all children on a delayed schedule are up to date on vaccines by 2 years old.
- Human Papilloma Virus vaccine (Gardasil) and Influenza vaccines are optional vaccines on the schedule and not required.
- For those who have expectations that we feel we cannot meet, we will ask that you find a different practice/ doctor to continue care.

Please know that our intention is to make sure children get the best possible care that is based on scientific evidence. It is our sincere hope that you continue to trust us to care for your children. We have administered hundreds of thousands of vaccines during our years of practice and NONE OF US has seen a significant vaccine reaction with negative long-term effects.

We are committed to providing excellent care, and vaccines are an extremely important part of that care.

Thank you for your understanding and allowing us to participate in the care of your child.

We have included the resources below if you would like further information regarding immunizations.

RESOURCES:

[Center for Disease Control](#)

[HealthyChildren.org](#)

[Children's Hospital of Philadelphia](#)

[Talking about vaccines with Dr. Paul Offit, MD \(American Pediatrician and vaccine expert\)](#)