

## **Cranford Pediatrics Vaccine Policy Statement**

Since our start in 1988, at Cranford Pediatrics, we have prided ourselves in providing comprehensive, compassionate, and quality care to our patients and families. The care we deliver is guided by the principles and recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). At Cranford Pediatrics, we believe in vaccinating children in order to prevent them from acquiring life-threatening diseases. It is our obligation as healthcare professionals to stress the immense positive impact that immunizations have had on our society as well as the serious risk individuals undertake by choosing not to vaccinate.

As your trusted healthcare provider, we feel that we have a responsibility to protect our families and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases. Because of this, we can no longer accept the risk that unimmunized or under-immunized patients pose to other children and their families in our practice. Parents and patients who do not plan on consenting to immunizations deemed essential by the AAP and CDC or who do not wish to reasonably comply with the schedules prescribed for each vaccine will be asked to find a different physician to oversee their healthcare.

We feel that it is necessary at this time to tighten our regulations on immunizations because of the recent resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases in our country.

### **Vaccines and Autism**

Parents should note that any information regarding vaccines as a causative factor for autism spectrum disorders or other developmental disabilities is completely unsubstantiated. Multiple clinical studies have been conducted by medical professionals to investigate such theories and no evidence to support these claims has been found. Despite statements by members of the media, parents should not feel that vaccinating their children would put them at increased risk for developing such disorders.

### **Combination Vaccines**

Certain vaccines in our schedule are typically given as combination vaccines, that is, the manufacturer combines components for multiple diseases into one solution. This is done in order to increase compliancy with vaccination schedules and to decrease the number of injections administered. Combination vaccines are equally as safe and effective in preventing disease as individual vaccines.

### **Multiple Vaccines in an Appointment**

Your child may be prescribed multiple vaccines in the same office visit in order to comply with the AAP and CDC recommendations. Administering multiple vaccines in the same office visit is as safe and effective as administering them individually. There is no medical advantage to reducing the number of vaccines given in one visit and returning for extra visits. Parents who wish to alter the vaccination schedule for their children will be expected to keep appointments and adhere to the schedule prescribed by the physician. By choosing to delay vaccination parents must understand that they are increasing the risk of their child being exposed to and contracting serious illnesses.

### **Importance of Vaccines to Society**

Parents and caretakers may feel that the decision to immunize their child is personal decision. However, the decision not to immunize affects not only the individual child, but also the well being of other children and adults. Many individuals in our society are unable to receive certain or all vaccinations because they are too young, too old, have severe allergies to vaccine components or are immune-compromised. These individuals rely on "herd immunity". Herd immunity exists when at least 90% of individuals in a society are immune to a certain contagious disease. Their immunity prevents the spread of disease to those few individuals who are not immune.

For the first time in many decades, the herd immunity in the United States has dipped dangerously below 90%. This is directly related to the decrease in vaccination compliancy associated with misinformation provided by the media concerning the safety, effectiveness and necessity of vaccination. This is a serious concern to healthcare providers as certain vaccine-preventable diseases are more dangerous in vulnerable populations than in individuals who are otherwise healthy. For example, if an unimmunized 10 year old were to contract measles he/she would become ill but the infection would most likely not be life-threatening. However, if that child were to expose his/her infant cousin (who is too young to receive the measles vaccine), that baby would likely be hospitalized and face life-threatening complications. It is for this reason that we must stress to parents that vaccination is not only necessary to maintain your child's personal health but the health of the community at large.

### **Further Questions or Hesitations**

At Cranford Pediatrics we understand that it is easy for parents to be confused and overwhelmed with the amount of information that exists regarding vaccines and their safety. We are also aware that the media has played a large role in providing false information that can skew a parent's perception on what is in the best interest of their child. We encourage you to contact us if you have any further hesitations so that we may clarify what is research-based, accurate information and what is propaganda. We want all parents to feel confident about their decision to protect their children through immunization.