



# WATCHUNG PEDIATRICS



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## OFFICE VACCINE POLICY

At Watchung Pediatrics, we pride ourselves on providing comprehensive, compassionate, and state-of-the-art quality care to our patients in the communities that we are proud to serve. We truly believe that vaccinating children and teens to prevent them from acquiring life-threatening diseases is one of the most important services that we offer to our patients. Simply put, vaccines save lives.

Caregivers may feel that the decision to immunize their child is a personal one and they should not be required to immunize. However, the decision not to immunize affects not just the health of an individual child, but the health and well-being of other children and adults. All decisions have risks and benefits associated with them. The decision not to immunize a child requires parents to accept the risk that their child, or others, could suffer the crippling or deadly effects of a vaccine-preventable disease. As health care providers, we know based on the medical data that the benefits of immunizing children and adolescents far outweighs any perceived or unproven risks of harm. Vaccines produced today are safer and more effective than they have ever been. There is very solid, reliable medical evidence that vaccines do not cause Autism or any other developmental disabilities. Vaccines also don't contain any harmful toxins.

Some caregivers may also feel that polio, tetanus, whooping cough, meningitis, measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella are rare diseases that their child is unlikely to come in contact with, so they are "safe" in declining vaccinations. However, vaccination programs only work well when as many people as possible in a community are immunized. This is called "herd immunity" and it protects children and adults who are unable to receive the vaccines because they are too young, too old, or have weakened immune systems. In order for herd immunity to work effectively, 90% of people in a community must be vaccinated. Because of the refusal and delay in giving life-saving vaccines to children, herd immunity in our country has dipped dangerously below 90%, putting everyone at risk of illness or death.

Because we feel that Watchung Pediatrics has an important responsibility to protect our families and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases, we can't accept the risk that unimmunized or under-immunized children or teens pose to other children and their families in our practice and in our communities. Therefore, we have used the available information and guidelines from the Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to guide in the development of our own Watchung Pediatrics Vaccine Guidelines and Policy. This is consistent with what many other pediatric practices across the country are doing because of the recent return of deadly vaccine-preventable diseases. By enforcing its vaccine policy, Watchung Pediatrics does not discriminate against any religion or group. Furthermore, there are no religions that prohibit the vaccination of children and teens.

We want to assure you that it is completely fine to give multiple or combination vaccines at the same office visit. This is because the reactivity of the individual vaccines is a tiny fraction of what a child's immune system would be faced with if it were exposed to the actual diseases. Because we understand that despite the medical evidence and our assurances, some caregivers may still be skeptical about giving multiple vaccines at an office visit, we do try to accommodate our few families who want to give less than the recommended vaccines per visit. However, to be clear, this concession has no medical benefit whatsoever and delaying vaccines dangerously affects the herd immunity and puts children, adolescents, and adults at an increased risk of illness. In addition, separating the vaccines into multiple visits causes unnecessary additional pain to children and teens. In addition, Watchung Pediatrics will accept delays of vaccine administration only if they are within the "window" period of the Watchung Pediatric Vaccination Guidelines and Policy.

### Our policy states:

1. We utilized the immunization schedule that is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to guide in the development of our own Watchung Pediatrics Vaccine Guidelines and Policy. All children must receive all vaccines as per the Watchung Pediatrics Vaccine Policy.
2. The Watchung Pediatrics Policy is to be discussed at the newborn visit. If the parents need time to read and discuss the policy they may do so. If parents choose to waive the signing of the policy at the newborn visit the Watchung Pediatrics Policy **MUST** be signed when the patient returns for the 2 week old visit, no further time accommodations are to be made. Failure to sign the Watchung Pediatrics Vaccination Policy by the 2 week old visit **WILL** result in dismissal from the practice.
3. If you are a new patient transferring to our practice or an existing patient that has not had the discussion of our vaccine policy, it will be discussed at your visit. If parents choose to waive the signing of the policy at that visit, the Watchung Pediatrics Policy **MUST** be signed within 2 weeks of the visit and failure to sign **WILL** result in dismissal from the practice.
4. All children **MUST** begin receiving vaccines by age 1 month.
5. All parents who do not follow the exact Watchung Pediatric Guidelines must sign a waiver that they are utilizing an alternate vaccine schedule, approved by a physician or nurse practitioner and completed at the time of the visit.
6. If a caregiver elects to give less than the recommended number of vaccines at a visit, a schedule must be agreed upon with the provider. The child must return to the office following that schedule and stay within the recommended "window" for the vaccines. Delayed vaccines must be completed prior to the age of the next recommended Well Visit. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the practice. A follow up vaccine only appointment **MUST** be made when leaving the office after a child's checkup.

7. Failure to **MAKE** the appointments listed, or failure to **KEEP** the schedule listed will result in dismissal. Deviations to the schedule or cancelling appointments will only be allowed if there is appropriate documentation of extenuating circumstances or medical care received for moderate/severe illness at which time vaccines were not recommended.
8. In the event that a parent or guardian agrees to a vaccine administration and then the parent or guardian changes their decision to vaccinate, but the vaccine was already prepared for administration and drawn out of the vial, the parent or guardian will be financially responsible for the price of the vaccine as it would not be covered by insurance.
9. Patients who are on an alternate vaccination schedule **WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE SEEN DURING WALK- IN HOURS**. Patients will only be seen during scheduled sick times. This is for the safety of the rest of our patients and office staff.
10. Failure to complete **ALL** vaccines listed below as mandatory by the Watchung Pediatrics Vaccine Guidelines and Policy will result in dismissal. If on an alternate vaccine schedule failure to complete vaccines by the pre determined date will result in dismissal.
11. In order to make the alternate schedule clear to providers, staff and caregivers, and to minimize vaccine administration errors, providers will enter "refused vaccine" into a patient's EHR immunization record if they didn't get the recommended vaccines on that day.
12. Caretakers who do not agree with the Watchung Pediatrics vaccine policy and do not plan on immunizing their children within the time frame specified will be given a 1-month grace period to find another pediatric practice.

**Watchung Pediatrics has a few additional guidelines for some specific vaccines:**

1. The first dose of Hep B must be completed by 1 month of age.
2. The Influenza vaccine is strongly recommended for all children and teens age 18 or younger. It is mandatory for all children in a state-licensed daycare centers and preschools.
3. The Gardasil vaccine is an anti-cancer, three-dose vaccine series (two-dose series if started before 15 years old) which is strongly recommended for older children and teens. Research shows that it is most effective when given during the preteen/early teen years (11-13).

Our providers welcome discussion about our Watchung Pediatrics Vaccine policy with any of our families. We hope that you understand that we have devised our policy in order to protect children, their families and our communities from dreadful diseases and potential death by administering safe and effective vaccines in a reasonable, organized and practical way.

**Watchung Pediatrics Vaccine Recommended Guidelines**

Patient Age	Vaccines required at corresponding ages
Newborn	Hepatitis B
1 month	Hepatitis B
2 month	Pentacel (DTap, IPV HIB), Pneumococcal, Rotavirus
4 month	Pentacel (DTap, IPV HIB), Pneumococcal, Rotavirus
6 month	Pentacel (DTap, IPV HIB), Pneumococcal, Rotavirus
9 month	Hepatitis B
1 year	MMR, Varicella, *Hepatitis A
15 month	Pentacel, Pneumococcal

Patient Age	Vaccines required at corresponding ages
18 month	*Hepatitis A
4 years	MMR Varicella
5 years	DTaP IPV
11 years	Tdap, Meningococcal ACYW
11-15 yo	*HPV 2 dose before 15 yo 6mo apart
15 yo	*HPV 3 dose 1-2 -2 month, 2-3 -6 month from dose 1- 12 weeks from dose 2
16 yo	Meningococcal ACYW
17 yo	*Meningococcal B 2 dose 6 mo-1 year apart

*\*Not Mandatory*

All other vaccines listed above are mandatory and required for all patients at Watchung Pediatrics. Other vaccines not listed that are recommended but not mandatory are the Influenza vaccine, the COVID-19 Vaccine Booster, and for newborns the Beyfortus RSV Vaccine.

For further information in regards to vaccines please visit [www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org)



**You Must Provide Patients with Vaccine Information Statements—It's the Law!**  
Explains VIS legal requirements, where to find them, and dates of current VISs. (PDF)



### Immunization Policy Agreement

It is the policy of Watchung Pediatrics that all children who come to our practice for care receive all immunizations that are required to be given according to the schedule put forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics. We are unable to provide care to families who do not follow the required schedule. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have, however, there are no exceptions to this policy without valid medical contraindication.

Watchung Pediatrics believes that immunizations are of vital importance in the health of children individually and the population as a whole. By signing below, I acknowledge the immunization policy of Watchung Pediatrics and agree to have my child immunized according to their schedule.

Patient Name	Date of Birth
Sibling 1 Name	Date of Birth
Sibling 2 Name	Date of Birth
Sibling 3 Name	Date of Birth
Sibling 4 Name	Date of Birth
Parent(s) Name	
Signature	Date
Provider Signature	