

## Southcoast Health Position on Vaccines Q & A

### **Q- Are vaccines safe?**

**A-** Yes. Vaccines are not only safe, they are effective in preventing serious illnesses that can be debilitating and even cause death. The benefits of vaccination extend beyond the individual. When someone is appropriately vaccinated, they also help protect infants who are too young to be vaccinated and people who cannot receive vaccinations due to medical reasons.

### **Q- What is the recommended schedule for vaccinations?**

**A-** Based on best medical practices and scientific evidence, all children and young adults who see Southcoast Health providers are required to receive the minimum recommended vaccines as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), unless there is a medical reason why a child should not receive vaccinations. Parents and guardians should work with their child's doctor to choose the best vaccination strategy for their family.

For more information on the CDC's Minimum Recommended Vaccines and their administering schedule, [please see Table 1 on the attached PDF \*Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule for ages 18 years or younger.\*](#)

### **Q- Can I break up the vaccine schedule for my child so they only get one or two at each visit?**

**A-** This is not recommended. Breaking up the vaccines puts your child and others at risk for serious illness or even death. It is Southcoast Health's position to vaccinate children and young adults according to the schedule published by Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

### **Q- Do vaccines cause autism?**

**A-** No. Scientific studies have repeatedly shown that there is no link between vaccines and autism. In 1998 an unfounded claim was published stating that the MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccines caused autism. Not only was this false study retracted, the physician who made the claim had his license revoked. The fallout from that false study resulted in many people in the United States and Europe choosing not to vaccinate their children.

Due to under-immunization, there have been large outbreaks of measles resulting in several deaths caused by complications of the disease. There has also been a recurrence of other serious diseases that are preventable by vaccines.

**Q- Aren't vaccines full of chemicals that are harmful and can cause developmental disabilities?**

**A-** No. Vaccines are safe and do not cause developmental disabilities. Vaccines have been safely and effectively used for decades and there have been no legitimate studies connecting vaccines to autism or any other developmental disabilities.

**Q- Is it true that most vaccines are for diseases that are eradicated, therefore my child will not get sick?**

**A-** This is false. While the incidence of certain diseases has significantly reduced because of vaccines, the vaccine campaign has become a victim of its own success.

The effectiveness of vaccines preventing disease has caused people to doubt their need. Because of the success of vaccines, most people have never encountered a child with who is suffering with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis or even chickenpox. Many, no longer know a friend or a family member whose child has died due to these diseases. The false belief of the eradication of these diseases has also in turn caused outbreaks of measles. If this perception continues, it may lead to tragic results.