

Good afternoon,

My name is Dr. Molly Markowitz, and I am a general pediatrician who practices in New Haven.

I am chair of the advocacy committee for the Connecticut-American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter or known as the CT-AAP which represents over 600 pediatricians in CT.

The national AAP represents around 67,000 pediatricians from across the US.

Thank you to the public health chairs Rep. McCarthy Vahey and Sen. Anwar for the opportunity to participate in this forum today.

Right now, federal officials are sharing information and recommendations with parents and families that are false, confusing, and dangerous regarding vaccines and autism. Due to recent events where federal officials have undermined the rigorous scientific process for making vaccine recommendations, the AAP has now published an independent evidence-based immunization schedule for children and adolescents.

The CT AAP strongly supports and affirms the following:

1. Vaccines are effective, safe and save lives
2. The components of vaccines including adjuvants, stabilizers, and preservatives have been extensively tested and have been shown to be safe
3. Specifically:
  1. Aluminum salts are a safe adjuvant for vaccines. In fact, aluminum is a naturally occurring substance in our diet and infants are exposed to more aluminum in the first 6 months of life through breast milk and formula than in vaccines.
  2. Thimerosal which contains a type of mercury called ethyl mercury is a safe preservative. However, it has not been used in US childhood vaccines since the early 2000s
4. The new AAP vaccine schedule is backed by scientific evidence and expert consensus regarding safety and efficacy.
  1. The schedule continues to recommend universal COVID vaccination for children 6 months old to 2 years old, risk-based

vaccination for children 2 -18 years old (meaning if a child has a serious health condition), and preference-based vaccination for children 2 -18 years old (meaning if parents would like the protection)

2. The schedule continues to recommend Measles Mumps Rubella and Varicella vaccination via two methods for children younger than 4 years old. First method: one shot for Measles Mumps Rubella and Varicella combined (known as MMRV). Second method: Two shots at the same time, one for Measles Mumps Rubella (known as MMR) and a second for only Varicella. The AAP recommends discussing the risks and benefits of each method with parents and then utilizing parental preference to determine which way a child is vaccinated.
3. It continues to recommend giving the Hepatitis B vaccine within the first 24 hrs of life, to protect infants from infection. If infected, 90% of infants will develop chronic liver disease which can lead to premature death. Hepatitis B is transmitted through blood or other body fluids, with potential transmission happening during labor and delivery. However, it is a highly contagious virus and can be transmitted while caring for an infant after birth.
5. Decades of research have found that there is no scientific evidence that vaccines cause autism.
  1. Further, there is no scientific evidence that giving vaccines individually, decreases the risk of developing autism.
  2. The cause of autism is currently unknown; it is thought to be multifactorial and increasingly linked to genetics.
  3. If families have questions about vaccines or the causes of autism, please encourage them to speak with their trusted pediatrician.
  4. For children with autism, pediatricians are committed to supporting their growth and development and expanding opportunities for them to thrive.

Moving forward, it is critical for Connecticut officials to provide families with scientifically rigorous information. The new [AAP vaccine schedule](#) is posted to the AAP website as well as a [Fact Check](#) page where individuals can learn more about specific topics.

The CT-AAP is eager to work with community and state officials to help ensure that CT's children continue to have critical access to all of the vaccines that are recommended by the evidenced-based, scientifically rigorous AAP vaccine schedule.

Connecticut currently has some of the highest vaccine rates in the country, as well as strong school entry immunization requirements which are a critical tool to help ensure the health of CT children and families.

Thank you for the time to speak