



## Documenting Parental Refusal to Have Their Children Vaccinated

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All parents and patients should be informed about the risks and benefits of preventive and therapeutic procedures, including vaccination. In the case of vaccination, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly recommends and federal law mandates that this discussion include the provision of the Vaccine Information Statements (VISs). Despite our best efforts to educate parents about the effectiveness of vaccines and the realistic chances of vaccine-associated adverse events, some will decline to have their children vaccinated. This often results from families misinterpreting or misunderstanding information presented by the media and on unmonitored and biased Web sites, causing substantial and often unrealistic fears.

Within a 12-month period, 74% of pediatricians report encountering a parent who refused or delayed one or more vaccines. A 2011 survey of children six months to six years of age reported that 13% of parents followed an alternative vaccination schedule. Of these, 53% refused certain vaccines and 55% delayed some vaccines until the child was older. Seventeen percent reported refusing all vaccines. In a 2009 survey, 11.5% of parents of children 17 years and younger reported refusing at least one vaccine. The use of this or a similar form in concert with direct and non-condescending discussion can demonstrate the importance you place on appropriate immunizations, focuses parents' attention on the unnecessary risk for which they are accepting responsibility, and may in some instances induce a wavering parent to accept your recommendations.

Providing parents (or guardians) with an opportunity to ask questions about their concerns regarding recommended childhood immunizations, attempting to understand parents' reasons for refusing one or more vaccines, and maintaining a supportive relationship with the family are all part of a good risk management strategy. The AAP encourages documentation of the health care provider's discussion with parents about the serious risks of what could happen to an unimmunized or under-immunized child. Provide parents with the appropriate VIS for each vaccine at each immunization visit and answer their questions. For parents who refuse one or more recommended immunizations, document your conversation and the provision of the VIS(s), have a parent sign the Refusal to Vaccinate form, and keep the form in the patient's medical record. The AAP also recommends that you revisit the immunization discussion at each subsequent appointment and carefully document the discussion, including the benefits to each immunization and the risk of not being age-appropriately immunized. For unimmunized or partially immunized children, some physicians may want to flag the chart to be reminded to revisit the immunization discussion, as well as to alert the provider about missed immunizations when considering the evaluation of future illness, especially young children with fevers of unknown origin.

This form may be used as a template to document that the health care provider had a discussion with the parent signing the form about the risks of failing to immunize the child. It is not intended as a substitute for legal advice from a qualified attorney as differing state laws and factual circumstances will impact the outcome. While it may be modified to reflect the particular circumstances of a patient, family, or medical practice, practices may want to consider obtaining advice from a qualified attorney. If a parent refuses to sign the refusal form such refusal along with the name of a witness to the refusal should be documented in the medical record.

The AAP Section on Infectious Diseases and other contributing sections and committees hope this form will be helpful to you as you deal with parents who refuse immunizations. It is available on the AAP Web site on the Section on Infectious Diseases Web site (<http://www2.aap.org/sections/infectdis/resources.cfm>), and the Web site for the AAP Childhood Immunization Support Program (<http://www2.aap.org/immunization/pediatricians/refusaltovaccinate.html>).

Sincerely,

/s/

Tina Tan, MD, FAAP  
Chairperson

AAP Section on Infectious Diseases

/s/

Ed Rothstein, MD, FAAP  
AAP Section on Infectious Diseases

# Rechazo a las vacunas

Nombre del niño(a): \_\_\_\_\_ N.º de ID del niño(a): \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del padre/madre/tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

El médico/enfermera de mi hijo, \_\_\_\_\_, me ha aconsejado que mi hijo(a) (cuyo nombre aparece arriba) debe recibir las siguientes vacunas:

Recomendada	Rechazada
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra la hepatitis B	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra difteria, tétano, tos ferina acelular (DTaP o Tdap)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra difteria, tétano (DT o Td)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> tipo b (Hib)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna antineumocócica conjugada o con polisacáridos	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra la polio (virus inactivo) (IPV)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra sarampión, paperas y rubeola (MMR)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra la varicela	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra la influenza (gripe)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna conjugada contra el meningococo o vacuna de polisacáridos	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra la hepatitis A	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra el rotavirus	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuna contra el virus de papiloma humano (VPH)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Otra _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Se me dio la oportunidad de leer cada uno de los Comunicados informativos sobre las vacunas de los Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, que explican la(s) vacuna(s) y la(s) enfermedad(es) que previenen para cada una de las vacunas marcadas como recomendadas y para las que he rechazado, según se indica arriba. Se me dio la oportunidad de hablar sobre las recomendaciones y mi(s) rechazo(s) con el médico o enfermera de mi hijo(a), quien respondió todas mis preguntas sobre las vacunas recomendadas. Está disponible una lista de razones para la vacunación, posibles consecuencias médicas por no vacunarse y posibles efectos secundarios de cada una de las vacunas, en [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/default.htm). Comprendo lo siguiente:

- El propósito y la necesidad de las vacunas recomendadas.
- Los riesgos y beneficios de las vacunas recomendadas.

- Que algunas enfermedades que previenen las vacunas son comunes en otros países y que si mi hijo(a) no recibe esas vacunas y hace un viaje, podría fácilmente contraer una de esas enfermedades de otro viajero.
- Si mi hijo(a) no recibe las vacunas de acuerdo con el programa médicamente aceptado, las consecuencias podrían incluir:
  - Contraer la enfermedad que la vacuna tiene como meta prevenir (los resultados de estas enfermedades podrían incluir uno o más de los siguientes: ciertos tipos de cáncer, neumonía, enfermedades que requieren hospitalización, la muerte, daño cerebral, parálisis, meningitis, convulsiones y sordera; también son posibles otros efectos severos y permanentes de estas enfermedades que se pueden prevenir con la vacuna).
  - Contagiar la enfermedad a otras personas (incluyendo aquellas que son demasiado jóvenes para vacunarse o aquellas con problemas inmunológicos), lo que posiblemente requiera que mi hijo(a) no vaya a la guardería o a la escuela y que alguien falte al trabajo para quedarse en casa con él(ella) durante los brotes de esas enfermedades.
- El médico de mi hijo(a) y la American Academy of Pediatrics, la American Academy of Family Physicians y los Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recomiendan a todos enfáticamente que se administren las vacunas de acuerdo con las recomendaciones.

Sin embargo, he decidido en este momento rechazar o posponer la(s) vacuna(s) recomendada(s) para mi hijo(a), según se indica arriba, al marcar el cuadro apropiado bajo la columna “Rechazada”. Estoy consciente de que no seguir las recomendaciones sobre las vacunas puede poner en peligro la salud o la vida de mi hijo(a) y **de otras personas con quien mi hijo pudiera tener contacto. Por lo tanto, acepto indicar a todos los profesionales de atención médica en todas partes que vacunas no ha recibido mi hijo en caso de que necesitara estar aislado o requerir una evaluación médica de inmediato y pruebas que podrían no ser necesarias si mi hijo se hubiera vacunado.**

Estoy consciente de que puedo volver a tratar este asunto con el médico o enfermera de mi hijo(a) en cualquier momento y que puedo cambiar de opinión y aceptar la vacuna para mi hijo(a) en cualquier momento en el futuro.

Acepto haber leído y comprendido este documento en su totalidad.

Firma del padre/madre/tutor: _____	Fecha: _____
Testigo: _____	Fecha: _____
He tenido la oportunidad de hablar nuevamente sobre mi decisión de no vacunar a mi hijo y sigo rechazando las vacunas recomendadas.	
Iniciales del padre/madre: _____	Fecha: _____
Iniciales del padre/madre: _____	Fecha: _____



## Parental Refusal to Accept Vaccination: Resources for Pediatricians

The following are some of the resources available to help pediatricians develop a productive dialogue with vaccine-hesitant parents and answer questions about vaccine risks and benefits:

### Web Sites

#### 1. AAP Childhood Immunization Support Program (CISP)

Information for providers and parents.  
[www.aap.org/immunization](http://www.aap.org/immunization) and  
[www2.aap.org/immunization/pediatricians/refusaltovaccinate.html](http://www2.aap.org/immunization/pediatricians/refusaltovaccinate.html)

#### 2. Immunization Action Coalition (IAC)

The IAC works to increase immunization rates by creating and distributing educational materials for health professionals and the public that enhance the delivery of safe and effective immunization services. The IAC “Unprotected People Reports” are case reports, personal testimonies, and newspaper and journal articles about people who have suffered or died from vaccine-preventable diseases.  
[www.immunize.org/reports](http://www.immunize.org/reports)

#### 3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Immunization Program

Information about vaccine safety.  
[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp.htm)

#### 4. National Network for Immunization Information (NNii)

Includes information to help answer patients’ questions and provide the facts about immunizations.  
<http://www.immunizationinfo.org/professionals>

#### 5. Vaccine Education Center at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

Information for parents includes “Vaccine Safety FAQs” and “A Look at Each Vaccine.”  
[www.vaccine.chop.edu](http://www.vaccine.chop.edu)

#### 6. Institute for Vaccine Safety, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Provides an independent assessment of vaccines and vaccine safety to help guide decision-makers and educate physicians, the public, and the media about key issues surrounding the safety of vaccines.  
[www.vaccinesafety.edu](http://www.vaccinesafety.edu)

#### 7. Immunize Canada

Immunize Canada aims to meet the goal of eliminating vaccine-preventable disease through education, promotion, advocacy, and media relations. It includes resources for parents and providers.  
[www.immunize.cpha.ca/en/default.aspx](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca/en/default.aspx)

#### 8. Sample office policy/letter to parents about refusal to vaccinate

### Journal Articles

1. Offit PA, Jew RK. Addressing parents’ concerns: do vaccines contain harmful preservatives, adjuvants, additives, or residuals? *Pediatrics*. 2003;112(6 Pt 1):1394–1397
2. Offit PA, Quarles J, Gerber MA, et al. Addressing parents’ concerns: do multiple vaccines overwhelm or weaken the infant’s immune system? *Pediatrics*. 2002;109(1):124–129
3. Diekema DS, American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Bioethics. Responding to parental refusals of immunization of children. *Pediatrics*. 2005;115(5):1428–1431

### Books

1. American Academy of Pediatrics. *Red Book: 2012 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. Pickering LK, Baker CJ, Long SS, Kimberlin DW, eds. 29th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2012
2. Marshall GS. *The Vaccine Handbook: A Practical Guide for Clinicians*. 4th ed. West Islip, NY: Professional Communications, Inc; 2012

### Handout

1. Immunization Action Coalition. Reliable sources of immunization information: where to go to find answers! <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4012.pdf>. Accessed October 17, 2012

## Reliable Immunization Resources for Parents

### Web Sites

#### 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Vaccine Information Statements

Provide possible health consequences of non-vaccination and possible side effects of each vaccine.  
[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/default.htm)

#### 2. AAP Childhood Immunization Support Program (CISP)

Information for providers and parents.  
[www.aap.org/immunization](http://www.aap.org/immunization)

#### 3. Why Immunize?

A description of the individual diseases and the benefits expected from vaccination.  
[www2.aap.org/immunization/families/faq/whyimmunize.pdf](http://www2.aap.org/immunization/families/faq/whyimmunize.pdf)

#### 4. Pennsylvania Immunization Education Program of Pennsylvania Chapter, AAP

Includes answers to common vaccine questions and topics, such as addressing vaccine safety concerns; evaluating anti-vaccine claims; sources of accurate immunization information on the Web; and talking with parents about vaccine safety.  
[www.paiep.org](http://www.paiep.org)

#### 5. CDC For Parents: Vaccines for Your Children

Information about vaccine safety.  
[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html)

#### 6. National Network for Immunization Information (NNii)

Includes information to help answer patients’ questions and provide the facts about immunizations.  
[www.immunizationinfo.org/parents](http://www.immunizationinfo.org/parents)

#### 7. Vaccine Education Center at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

Information for parents includes “Vaccine Safety FAQs” and “A Look at Each Vaccine.”  
[www.vaccine.chop.edu](http://www.vaccine.chop.edu)

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Provides an independent assessment of vaccines and vaccine safety to help guide decision-makers and educate physicians, the public, and the media about key issues surrounding the safety of vaccines.  
[www.vaccinesafety.edu](http://www.vaccinesafety.edu)

#### 9. Immunize Canada

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<http://immunize.cpha.ca/en/default.aspx>

#### 10. Vaccinate Your Baby

This Every Child By Two site serves as a central resource of vaccine information for parents. The site links to the latest research and studies about vaccines, an interactive timeline on the benefits of vaccines, information about vaccine safety and ingredients, and the importance of adhering to the recommended schedule.  
[www.vaccinateyourbaby.org](http://www.vaccinateyourbaby.org)

### Books

1. American Academy of Pediatrics. *Immunizations and Infectious Diseases: An Informed Parent’s Guide*. Fisher MC, ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2006
2. Myers MG, Pineda D. *Do Vaccines Cause That?! A Guide for Evaluating Vaccine Safety Concerns*. Galveston, TX: Immunizations for Public Health; 2008
3. Offit PA. *Autism’s False Prophets: Bad Science, Risky Medicine, and the Search for a Cure*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press; 2008
4. Offit PA. *Deadly Choices: How the Anti-Vaccine Movement Threatens Us All*. New York, NY: Basic Books; 2011
5. Mnookin S. *The Panic Virus: A True Story of Medicine, Science, and Fear*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster; 2011
6. Offit PA, Moser CA. *Vaccines and Your Child: Separating Fact from Fiction*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press; 2011