

## Consent Policy/Procedure (Vaccines)

### Gaining informed consent

Informed consent is obtained prior to the administration of any vaccine. We take this very seriously, and it is the responsibility of the clinician who administers the treatment. Obtaining valid consent for medical procedures is both a moral and a legal requirement. However, it is not a legal requirement to obtain WRITTEN consent prior to administering a vaccine.

Consent is valid only for the vaccine/s being administered on that particular occasion. It is not valid for any vaccines in the future.

In order to obtain informed consent, we provide an extensive amount of information which parents are able to read at home before an appointment. A recent Inspection Report from the Healthcare Commission stated that our information is “factual and without bias”

[www.healthcarecommission.org.uk](http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk) .

To ensure that parents fully understand, all parents’ questions are fully answered, in as much detail as needed, and adequate time is allowed to discuss any issues arising.

All information is based upon current scientific evidence, to the best of our knowledge. The consenting adult is informed about the procedure taking place, the benefits and the disadvantages or risks of the immunisation, together with any possible side effects and how to treat them. Alternative vaccines, if available, are discussed.

On arrival at reception, the child’s name, date of birth, and Reference number with the Practice are checked with a parent to ensure that the correct medical record has been extracted from the record files. The parent is asked which vaccine they are expecting their child to receive. The Receptionist checks that it is the same as the vaccine entered to be given, in the appointment book. Each time they attend, parents are issued with an information sheet which is specific to the vaccine being administered. This is designed to be retained as part of the immunisation record in their child’s “Red Book”, and also for informing their GP.

This information sheet provides details of the vaccine type, manufacturer, country of origin, batch number, and expiry date of the vaccine that is to be administered. It also includes details of possible side effects, and what to do in case they should occur.

At the start of the consultation the clinician again checks with the parents that the child’s identity matches those stated on the medical record. The parent is again asked which vaccine they are expecting their child to receive, and the clinician confirms that this is appropriate and correct from the patient medical record. These steps help to minimise error and ensure that each child receives the appropriate/required vaccine.

The clinician is responsible for ensuring that the parent providing consent fully understands all the issues, and that the PARENT can make an informed decision about which vaccine they wish THEIR child to receive. To facilitate this, information is provided in a “language” that is readily understood. When needed this is supplemented by additional information in response to parents’ verbal, email, or postal questions and queries. The practice maintains a website dedicated to providing information for parents: [www.drjohnoakley.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.drjohnoakley.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk)

All information is complementary, and provided without obligation so that parents are able to provide consent without coercion. Great care is taken to adhere to “The Duties of a Doctor Registered with the General Medical Council” – Published by the General Medical Council: [www.gmcuk.org/guidance/good\\_medical\\_practice/duties\\_of\\_a\\_doctor.asp](http://www.gmcuk.org/guidance/good_medical_practice/duties_of_a_doctor.asp)

This practice has a reputation for being ethical, caring and professional. Parents have the right to withdraw their consent at any time prior to the vaccine being administered. Parental personal beliefs or prejudices are not allowed to influence the clinician’s management of their child. Parents are NEVER subjected to bullying, persuasion, ridicule, or told misleading or incorrect statements.

Parents are always informed in writing when changes, particularly those concerning the need to introduce a new “booster”, the introduction of a new vaccine, or changes to the National Childhood Immunisation Schedule, occur. During the last five years, Dr Oakley has been able to inform parents, and produce information leaflets about such changes BEFORE they have occurred.

### **Who can provide consent?**

The person providing consent for a particular child must have parental responsibility for that child.

The Children Act 1989 stipulates those who have parental responsibility for a child.

These include:

- The child’s natural mother.
- The child’s natural father, if married to the child’s mother.
- The natural father, not married to the mother, but named on the birth certificate. (Since 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003)
- The natural father, not married to the mother and not named on the birth certificate, but granted parental responsibility by Court procedure, or by virtue of a parental responsibility agreement signed by both parents and witnessed by an Officer of Court.
- A step parent, married to a natural parent with parental responsibility of the child.
- A step parent, by virtue of Court procedure, or a parental responsibility agreement.

When parents disagree about consent for a particular vaccine, immunisation is withheld until mutual agreement is reached, or a specific Court Directive is made. (One parent cannot “veto” the consent of the other. [www.the-MDU.com](http://www.the-MDU.com) ).

It is not a legal requirement that a person with parental responsibility is present during administration of a vaccine to a child. It is a requisite of this Practice that a letter of consent to administer the vaccine is provided by the person with parental responsibility. This letter **must** accompany the person who brings the child to the Practice.

If the clinician has any doubt that a person with parental responsibility has agreed to the immunisation, the vaccination is withheld and a person with parental responsibility contacted.

It is essential to keep legible, accurate, and contemporaneous records.

If further information is required, please refer to the Practice “Policies and Procedures” folder.

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