

# ■ Who Decides the Vaccine Schedule? Practical Pearls for Pediatricians

## Big Picture

- U.S. vaccine recommendations have evolved over 90+ years
- Decisions are driven by disease burden, safety, effectiveness, and implementation
- The goal is prevention of illness, hospitalization, disability, and death

## ■■ Who Decides?

**FDA:** Licenses vaccines based on clinical trial data

**ACIP:** Makes evidence-based recommendations for vaccine use

**AAP:** Publishes pediatric guidance and the Red Book

→■ ACIP recommendations become policy after CDC Director approval and MMWR publication

## ■ How We Got Here

- First AAP Red Book published in 1938
- ACIP formed in 1964 due to rapid vaccine development
- First harmonized childhood schedule released in 1995 (AAP, ACIP, AAFP)

## ■ How ACIP Works

- Multidisciplinary experts review disease epidemiology, safety, efficacy, and economics
- Transparent process with public meetings and comment
- Recommendations are guidance—not mandates

## ■■ Why Process Matters

- Vaccine schedules are not interchangeable between countries
- Low disease burden often reflects successful vaccination
- Shared Clinical Decision Making (SCDM) often lowers uptake and increases confusion

## ■ Vaccine Myths — The Facts

- Children are protected against 17 diseases by age 18
- Infant immune systems handle thousands of antigens daily
- Aluminum exposure from vaccines is far less than from diet and is safe

## ■■ Why Key Vaccines Matter

- Hep B birth dose prevents missed perinatal infections
- Rotavirus vaccination prevents tens of thousands of hospitalizations
- Influenza vaccination prevents severe disease and pediatric deaths

## ■ Your Role

- You are families' most trusted source of vaccine information
- Use standing orders, reminder/recall, and strong recommendations
- Align the entire care team around vaccination messaging

*Bottom Line:* Vaccine recommendations must follow science, transparency, and public health principles. Clear, evidence-based guidance protects children and communities.