

If Your Pediatric Practice Dismisses Your Child Over Its Vaccination Policy

A Simple Parent Guide

Being told that your child can no longer remain in a pediatric practice can be jarring. You may be angry, embarrassed, worried about losing access to care, or simply ready to get out of the room.

Do not let the moment rush you out the door unprepared.

You do not have to argue about vaccines. You do not have to persuade the practice to change its policy.

Your job now is simpler:

Document the decision. Protect your child's continuity of care. Get the records. Know what happens next.

Bring the **Pediatric Practice Dismissal & Continuity-of-Care Form** with you if you can.

Before You Leave: The Checklist

- ☐ **Ask for the dismissal decision in writing.** If the practice has its own termination letter, get a copy.
 - ☐ **Write down the effective date** when the practice says care will end.
 - ☐ **Ask what care remains available until that date.** Include sick visits, urgent needs, refills, follow-ups, and pending tests.
 - ☐ **Ask what to do if your child becomes sick** before you have established care with another practitioner.
 - ☐ **Request a complete copy of your child's medical record for yourself.**
 - ☐ **Ask whether the records can be provided today.**
 - ☐ If they cannot, **submit the records request before leaving** and document who received it and how the records will be delivered.
 - ☐ **Request the immunization record separately** so it is easy to find and use.
 - ☐ **Download everything currently available in the patient portal**--visit notes, lab results, immunization records, medication lists, referrals, and relevant messages.
 - ☐ **Ask how long you will retain portal access** after dismissal.
 - ☐ **Ask for names or resources for finding continuing pediatric care.**
 - ☐ **Identify anything medically unfinished:** pending labs, prescriptions, referrals, follow-up appointments, chronic conditions, developmental concerns, or school/sports paperwork.
 - ☐ **Write down the name and title of everyone you spoke with.**
 - ☐ **Keep copies of everything.**
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What to Say

You do not need legal language.

Try:

"I understand that the practice has decided to end my child's care. I'm not here to argue about that decision. I want to make sure the transition is clear. Could you please document the termination date and transition arrangements, and accept my request for a complete copy of my child's medical record?"

If the practice will not complete or sign the VaxCalc form:

"That's okay. Please give me the practice's own written termination notice. I still need to submit my child's medical-record request."

A practice is not necessarily required to sign the form you bring. **The form is still useful even if they refuse.** Record who you spoke with, when the form was presented, what the practice said, whether its own notice was provided, and whether your records request was accepted.

Get Your Child's Records

Ask for a **complete copy for yourself**, not only a promise to send records to a future pediatrician.

You may not know who the next practitioner will be yet. Having your own copy gives you control over the transition.

Useful records commonly include:

- visit and progress notes;
- immunization history;
- medication history;
- problem list and medical history;
- growth charts;
- laboratory and test results;
- imaging reports;
- specialist and consultation reports contained in the chart;
- consent or refusal forms; and
- hospital or urgent-care records contained in the chart.

Under the federal HIPAA Privacy Rule, covered entities generally must act on a valid access request within **30 calendar days**. Many practices can provide records sooner, especially through a patient portal. A parent generally may exercise access rights for a minor child when the parent is the child's personal representative, subject to state law and recognized exceptions.

Try to leave with the records. At minimum, leave with a documented request for them.

Do Not Lose Unfinished Medical Care

Before the relationship ends, write down anything that still needs attention:

- ☐ Pending lab or test result
- ☐ Prescription or refill
- ☐ Specialist referral
- ☐ Follow-up appointment
- ☐ Chronic-condition care
- ☐ Developmental concern
- ☐ School, daycare, or sports medical paperwork
- ☐ Other: _____

Ask the practice who is responsible for each item during the transition.

Your State Matters

This is the **general** VaxCalc guide.

The rules governing termination of an established physician-patient relationship vary by state. State law, licensing-board regulations, and professional standards may affect:

- how notice must be given;
- how much transition time is required;
- access to and fees for medical records;
- what continuity-of-care steps are required;
- complaint procedures; and
- other protections.

Use a VaxCalc state-specific dismissal guide and form when one is available.

The general ethical standard is also important: the American Medical Association says physicians ending an established relationship should give enough advance notice for the patient to secure another physician and facilitate transfer of care when appropriate.

After the Immediate Problem Is Handled: Make Your Experience Count

If your child was dismissed because of a vaccination policy, you may want your state legislators to know what happened.

Do this **after you have protected your child's immediate continuity of care and records.**

1. Call

Call your state senator and state representative/delegate's **district offices**. Ask to speak with the staff member who handles health-care policy.

Briefly explain what happened and the effect it had on your child's access to care.

2. Follow with a written report

Prepare a short factual report that includes:

- the practice and location;
- date of dismissal;
- reason given;
- vaccination policy involved;
- Medicaid or other public-program participation, if relevant;
- notice period;
- records or continuity-of-care problems;
- difficulty finding replacement care; and
- any actual disruption to your child's care.

Attach copies of relevant documents when appropriate. Keep originals.

3. Request an in-person meeting

Ask to meet with the legislator or health-policy staff member.

Bring your written report and documentation.

You do not need to claim that the practice broke the law. A clear constituent story can stand on its own:

"This happened to my child. Here is exactly what happened. I believe families should be able to make vaccination decisions without losing reasonable access to primary care."

Remember

You do not have to win an argument. You need to leave prepared.

1. **Document** the dismissal.
 2. **Clarify** the transition.
 3. **Get** the records.
 4. **Protect** unfinished care.
 5. **Decide what to do next.**
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General Sources

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - HIPAA Right of Access <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-individuals/right-to-access/>
- HHS - Parental access to a minor child's medical records <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/faq/227/can-i-access-medical-record-if-i-have-power-of-attorney/>
- AMA Code of Medical Ethics - Terminating a Patient-Physician Relationship <https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/ethics-opinions/terminating-patient-physician-relationship>
- American Academy of Pediatrics - Policies for Families Who Refuse or Delay Vaccination <https://publications.aap.org/redbook/book/755/chapter/14074132/Policies-for-Families-Who-Refuse-or-Delay>

This guide is educational and organizational, not legal advice. State-specific law controls where applicable.

Prepared by VaxCalc.org