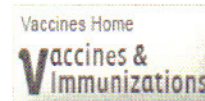




Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People.™



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## About VFC

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### The VFC Program: At a Glance

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The Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program helps provide vaccines to children whose parents or guardians may not be able to afford them. This helps ensure that all children have a better chance of getting their recommended vaccinations on schedule. Vaccines available through the VFC Program are those recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP ([/vaccines/acip/index.html](http://vaccines/acip/index.html))). These vaccines protect babies, young children, and adolescents from 16 diseases (<http://www.cdc.gov/features/vfcprogram/#vfclist>).

Funding for the VFC program is approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and allocated through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CDC buys vaccines at a discount and distributes them to grantees—i.e., state health departments and certain local and territorial public health agencies—which in turn distribute them at no charge to those private physicians' offices and public health clinics registered as VFC providers.

### Roles of Those Involved

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This site serves 3 main audiences:

1. The parent or guardian of the child needing vaccines provided by the VFC who needs to know what the VFC offers them, how to find vaccines provided, and who to contact for answers to questions.
2. The provider, whether currently enrolled or wants to know the incentives for joining the VFC program, what's involved, how to order vaccines, and how costs and fees are handled.
3. The awardee, with the largest role, that performs the paperwork; distributes vaccines; complies with changing state and federal regulations; manages the program; recruits and enrolls providers in the program; evaluates performance; controls, identifies, and differentiates fraud from abuse; provides quality assurance and improvement, conducts provider site visits; completes surveys; returns, replaces, or files credits for vaccines, etc.

### Determining Eligibility

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A child is eligible for the VFC Program if he or she is younger than 19 years of age and is one of the following:

- Medicaid-eligible
- Uninsured
- Underinsured [[1](#)] ([#f1](#))
- American Indian or Alaska Native

Children whose health insurance covers the cost of vaccinations are not eligible for VFC vaccines, even when a claim for the cost of the vaccine and its administration would be denied for payment by the insurance carrier because the plan's deductible had not been met.

## Footnotes

1. Underinsured means the child has health insurance, but it
  - Doesn't cover vaccines, or
  - Doesn't cover certain vaccines, or
  - Covers vaccines but has a fixed dollar limit or cap for vaccines. Once that fixed dollar amount is reached, a child is then eligible.

Underinsured children are eligible to receive vaccines only at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) or Rural Health Clinics (RHC). An FQHC is a type of provider that meets certain criteria under Medicare and Medicaid programs. To locate an FQHC or RHC, contact the state [VFC coordinator \(/vaccines/programs/vfc/contacts-state.html\)](/vaccines/programs/vfc/contacts-state.html).

For additional details, consult the "[Which Children are Eligible \(/parents/qa-detailed.html#eligibility\)](/parents/qa-detailed.html#eligibility)" section.

## What are the Costs or Fees?

There is no charge for any vaccines given by a VFC provider to eligible children. But there can be some other costs with a vaccination:

- Doctors can charge a set (or standard) fee to administer each shot. But if the family can't afford the fee per shot, the fee must be excused. A VFC-eligible child cannot be refused a vaccination due to the parent's or guardian's inability to pay for shot administration.
- There can be a fee for the office visit.
- There can be fees for non-vaccine services, like an eye exam or blood test.

## Locating a VFC Provider

Nationwide, there are over 44,000 doctors enrolled in the VFC Program. Each state's [VFC Coordinator \(/vaccines/programs/vfc/contacts-state.html\)](/vaccines/programs/vfc/contacts-state.html) can provide a list of doctors enrolled in the VFC Program. Other places that provide vaccinations are

- [Public Health Clinic \(http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/international/relres.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/international/relres.html)
- [Federally Qualified Health Center \(FQHC\) \(/parents/qa-detailed.html#fqhc\)](/parents/qa-detailed.html#fqhc)
- [Rural Health Clinic \(RHC\) \(/parents/qa-detailed.html#rhc\)](/parents/qa-detailed.html#rhc)

## History of the Vaccines for Children Program

In 1989 - 1991, a measles epidemic in the United States resulted in tens of thousands of cases of measles and hundreds of deaths. Upon investigation, CDC found that more than half of the children who had measles had not been immunized, even though many of them had seen a health care provider.

In partial response to that epidemic, Congress passed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) on August 10, 1993, creating the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. VFC became operational October 1, 1994. Known as section 1928 of the Social Security Act, the Vaccines for Children program is an entitlement program (a right granted by law) for eligible children, age 18 and younger.

## Related Pages

- [For Parents: VFC Questions and Answers \(.../parents/qa-detailed.html\)](#)
- [For Providers: VFC Questions and Answers \(/vaccines/programs/vfc/providers/questions/qa-flyer-hcp.html\)](#)
- [State VFC Web Sites \(/vaccines/programs/vfc/state-vfc-websites.html\)](#)
- [Recommended Immunization Schedules \(ACIP\) \(/vaccines/schedules/index.html\)](#)
- [Vaccine Supply Policy \(/vaccines/programs/vfc/about/vac-supply-policy/index.html\)](#)
- [VFC Program Distribution of Pediatric Vaccines \(/vaccines/programs/vfc/about/distribution.html\)](#)

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