

VFC Questions and Answers for Parents

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program offers vaccines at no cost for eligible children through VFC-enrolled doctors. Vaccinating on time means healthier children, families and communities.

Q: Which children are eligible?

A: Children through 18 years of age who meet at least one of the following criteria are eligible to receive VFC vaccine:

- **Medicaid eligible:** A child who is eligible for the Medicaid program. (For the purposes of the VFC program, the terms “Medicaid-eligible” and “Medicaid-enrolled” are equivalent and refer to children who have health insurance covered by a state Medicaid program)
- **Uninsured:** A child who has no health insurance coverage
- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** As defined by the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603)
- **Underinsured**

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).

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.

What is an FQHC?

An FQHC is a health center that is designated by the Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) of the Health Resources and Services Administration () to provide health care to a medically underserved population. FQHCs include community and migrant health centers, special health facilities such as those for the homeless, and HRSA Health Center Program “look-alikes,”

which meet the qualifications but do not actually receive federal award funding. They also include health centers within public housing and Indian health centers.

What is an RHC?

An RHC is a clinic located in a Health Professional Shortage Area, a Medically Underserved Area, or a Governor-Designated Shortage Area. RHCs are required to be staffed by physician assistants, nurse practitioners, or certified nurse midwives at least half of the time that the clinic is open.

Q: Where can I get vaccines?

A: VFC vaccines can be administered by any enrolled VFC Program provider (private doctor, private clinic, hospitals, Public Health Clinic, Community Health Clinic, Schools, etc.).

Most pediatricians (doctors specializing in the treatment of children) in the United States and its Territories are now VFC enrolled providers. Additionally, many family practice providers are enrolled, as well as general practitioners, and many other sub-specialty healthcare providers. In some States, schools are enrolled. Altogether, there are over 37,000 providers enrolled in the VFC Program nationwide.

Your State or Territory Health Department is responsible for managing the VFC Program where you reside. Each State or Territory has a VFC Program Coordinator that is responsible for enrolling providers and monitoring the provider's participation in the program. For help finding a VFC provider near you, see if your state has a searchable website for VFC providers or contact your [state or local health department](#).

Q: What is the cost?

A: If your child meets one of the VFC eligibility criteria listed above, the vaccine must always be provided free of charge.

Free of charge means just that. The vaccines have already been paid for with federal tax dollars. This means that no one can charge a fee for the vaccine itself.

However, each state immunization provider has been granted (by law) the ability to charge what is called an "administration fee." An administration fee is similar to a patient's co-pay, in that it helps providers offset their costs of doing business.

The amount of the administration fee differs from state to state, based on a regional scale determined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

These regional administrative charges are maximum fees that providers may ask patients to pay. That means that if a state's administration fee is \$15.00, a provider may charge a patient any amount up to, but not exceeding that \$15.00 charge, for each vaccine administered. There is no lower limit, so providers have the option to charge what they feel is fair, including no charge at all.

Q: What vaccines are provided? What diseases are prevented?

A: There are many single and combination vaccines that are licensed in the US and that protect children against 17 preventable diseases. The vaccines available through the VFC are determined by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices ([ACIP](#)). VFC covers any vaccines included in the pediatric immunization schedules:

- [Parent version of recommended immunizations for children from birth through 6 years old](#)
[\[2 pages\]](#)
- [Parent version of recommended immunizations for children from 7 through 18 years old](#)
[\[2 pages\]](#)

Diseases that are preventable by recommended childhood vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) include the Documents. Each disease is briefly described on the 2nd page of the documents.

Q: What other resources can I check (other useful links)?

A: You can reach out to Deaf Community Support Center at: