



## Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the VFC Program?**
2. **Which children are eligible for the VFC vaccine?**
3. **What do I have to do to join?**
4. **Is there a lot of paperwork involved?**
5. **Can I charge my patients for VFC vaccine?**
6. **Can I still charge administration visit fees?**
7. **Can I still charge office visit fees?**
8. **Do I have to follow ACIP recommendations?**
9. **Where can I go for more information?**

### 1. What is the VFC Program?

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) created the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program as Section 1928 of the Social Security Act on August 10, 1993. The VFC program, which began October 1, 1994, represents an unprecedented approach to improving vaccine availability nationwide by providing vaccine free of charge to VFC-eligible children through public and private providers.

The VFC program:

- Provides public purchased vaccine, for eligible children, **at no charge** to public and private providers in all states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- Automatically covers vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Saves parents and enrolled providers out-of-pocket expenses for vaccine.
- Eliminates vaccine cost as a barrier to immunizing eligible children.
- Reduces the practice of referring children from the private sector to the public sector for vaccination, thereby keeping children in their medical home for comprehensive health care.

The VFC program marks the first time private providers in all States are able to receive publicly purchased vaccine. By eliminating cost as a barrier to immunizing children, and providing opportunities for vaccinations at many health provider

locations, the VFC program supports improved immunization coverage levels among eligible children.

**The goal is to ensure that no VFC-eligible child contracts a vaccine preventable disease because of his or her parent's inability to pay for the vaccine or its administration.**

## **2. Which children are eligible for the VFC vaccine?**

The children who can get VFC vaccine are those children from birth through 18 years old who:

- Are enrolled in Medicaid
- Have no health insurance
- Are Native American or Alaskan Native, or
- Have health insurance, but it does not cover immunizations AND they go to a Federally Qualified Health Center.

## **3. What do I have to do to join?**

Enrollment is easy! The forms you will need are included and if you have any questions call your VFC Program Coordinator. You will be asked to provide:

- The address where you can receive vaccine shipments.
- The names, Medicaid ID's and License Numbers of all providers in your practice who administer vaccines.
- An estimate of the number of children eligible for VFC in your practice (this is done so that your VFC Program can estimate how much vaccine funding and inventory is needed for your area).
- Vaccine Information Sheets to each parent as required by law.

## **4. Is there a lot of paperwork involved?**

You will be asked to screen your patients before administering pediatric vaccines to determine whether the child is VFC-eligible. This can be done with a quick

check-off list in your charts. Once a year, you will be asked to estimate the number of children in your practice who are VFC-eligible so that the VFC Program will know how much vaccine funding they will need. The other paperwork requirements vary by state, but usually involve no more than a few simple forms when you order vaccines. Ask your VFC program for more information on your area's requirements.

**5. Can I charge my patients for VFC vaccine?**

No. The VFC vaccine is being provided to you at no cost to your practice. (The VFC Program pays your shipping costs, as well.) You may not charge for this vaccine.

**6. Can I still charge administration visit fees?**

You may charge administration fees up to the cap established for your area by the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA). However, if a patient is unable to pay their administration fee, you may not deny them the vaccine. Check with your VFC Program for the administration fee cap in your area. If the patient is on Medicaid, you may still submit claims for the administration fee as allowed by your Medicaid Program.

**7. Can I still charge office visit fees?**

The office visit fee is between you and your patient. The VFC Program has no regulations governing the office visit fee. If your patient has no health insurance, they may qualify for Medicaid or low-cost insurance available through the State Child Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP). Ask your VFC Program for more information on these programs in your area.

**8. Do I have to follow ACIP recommendations?**

You are expected to follow ACIP recommendations, but you are, more importantly, expected to exercise individual medical judgment.

**9. Where can I go for more information?**

Contact the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Immunization Program at 1-800-642-3634 or (304) 558-2188.