

KENTUCKY VACCINES FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM (VFC)

The state of Kentucky has a vaccine assistance program, for eligible children, at no charge. This program will help cover immunizations such as the flu vaccine, HPV vaccine, TDAP vaccine, Meningitis vaccine and others.

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. Since it's inception, it has become a critical element of nationwide childhood immunizations initiatives. The VFC program, which began October 1, 1994, represents an unprecedented approach to 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.
- Reduces the practice of referring children from private sector to the public sector for vaccination, keeping children in their medical home for comprehensive health care.
- Eliminates or reduces vaccine cost as a barrier to immunizing eligible children.

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 it's administration.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE VFC VACCINE?

Children, birth through 18 years of age (under 19 years of age) who:

- Are enrolled in Medicaid
- Do not have insurance or are uninsured
- Are American Indian or Alaskan Native

- Have health insurance that does not cover vaccine or are underinsured. Underinsured children are eligible to receive VFC vaccines only at a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) or rural Health Clinic (RHC).

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

Children enrolled in Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program (KCHIP) are technically not VFC-eligible because they are neither Medicaid-eligible nor uninsured. However, the Department for Public Health has entered into an agreement with the Department of Medicaid Services to be the purchasing and distribution agent of vaccines for children enrolled in the KCHIP Phase III Program. Therefore, KCHIP providers, who are also VFC providers, may serve KCHIP Phase III recipients with vaccines supplied through the Kentucky Immunization program.

WHAT DO I DO TO RECEIVE VACCINES?

Enrollment is easy! Contact your physician. Physician offices are required to screen each patient to ensure they are a VFC-eligible recipient. If you meet the aforementioned criteria, the physician's office will administer the vaccine. While there is no charge for the vaccine itself, there is a nominal charge for the administration of the vaccine as well as an office visit charge. The physician's office will complete all necessary forms and submit to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Office of the Secretary, Vaccines for Children Division.

LOW COST INSURANCE

Those who don't qualify for Medicaid may qualify for low-cost insurance available through the State Child Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP). Contact the VFC program in your area for additional information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding vaccines or immunizations, contact the Kentucky Immunization program at (502) 564-4478.