

# Immunizations

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**OVERVIEW**

***What is it?***

The Universal Childhood Vaccine Distribution Program (UCVDP) provides childhood vaccines to public and private health professionals at no charge. Children can receive the vaccines at no charge from public or private providers; although private physicians may charge a small fee to administer the vaccinations.

***Who is it for?***

Any North Carolina child from birth through age 18. There are no financial eligibility requirements.

***Where are applications taken?***

There are no applications for this program.

**INTRODUCTION**

The UCVDP was established to reduce cost as a barrier to children receiving vaccines and to enable children to receive these services from their traditional provider (i.e., their pediatricians' or family practitioners' office). In the past, the costs of the vaccinations created financial barriers for some families. Private physicians often referred patients to local Health Departments to obtain free vaccinations, a practice which led to fragmentation of medical services and a lower rate of immunizations. With the UCVDP, participating private physicians can obtain the vaccinations for free. The physicians, in turn, provide the vaccinations for free to the families (although private physicians may charge a fee of up to \$13.71 for one dose and \$27.42 for two or more doses to administer the vaccinations. This fee is covered by Medicaid and many private health insurance companies if the child has private health insurance).

**BENEFITS/  
SERVICES**

**Required Immunizations**

Children are eligible for the following vaccinations at the following time schedules:

Child's Age	Vaccines
2 months	Hepatitis B Polio DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, and acellular Pertussis) Hib ( <i>H. influenzae</i> type b)

Child's Age	Vaccines
4 months	Polio DTaP Hib Hepatitis B
6 months	Polio (between 6-18 months) DTaP Hib
12 months	MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) Hib Varicella (recommended, not required) Hepatitis B
15 months	DTaP
4-6 years (before starting school)	Polio DTP MMR

### Exemptions

Children must receive the full array of immunizations listed above before they can be admitted to school. There are two exceptions to the immunization requirements: medical and religious.

- *Medical exemptions.* Children can be exempt from specific immunization requirements if a physician certifies that the child could be detrimentally affected by the administration of a vaccine. The medical exemption must correspond to a medical contraindication specified in the NC Immunization Rules. The doctor must indicate the basis for the exemption, the specific vaccine which should not be administered, and the length of time that the exemption will apply.

A physician licensed to practice in North Carolina must submit a request to the State Health Director if he or she wishes to have a child exempted from receiving certain immunizations for reasons other than those listed in state regulations (governing medical contraindications).

The State Health Director or his designee will review the request and respond in writing to the physician. The family will be sent a copy of the decision. If the request is denied, the family may appeal the decision by filing a Petition for Contested Case Hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings. A copy of this form can be obtained by calling 919-733-0926 or writing to PO Box Drawer 27447, 424 N. Blount St., Raleigh, NC 27611. If the decision is appealed, the case will be heard by an Administrative Law Judge who will make a final recommendation to the State Health Director. The appeal must be filed within 30 days of the receipt of the decision.

A child will not be allowed to attend school or a child care facility if an appeal is not filed or the child has not obtained the required immunizations.

- *Religious Exemption.* A child can also be exempt from the immunization requirements if the parent, guardian or custodial parent claims a bona fide religious objection to the immunization requirements.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

All children who are in need of required childhood vaccinations can obtain the vaccinations at no cost, if they seek services from a participating physician. Approximately 92% of private physicians participate in the UCVDP.

In addition, families can still obtain vaccines without any expense (no administration fee) from local Health Departments and Community, Migrant and Rural Health Centers. Some Health Departments limit the times (days and hours) when they administer immunizations, so families should call first to find out the times and locations where the immunizations will be provided.

Parents are requested to bring their child's immunization record with them to all visits. If a parent does not know what immunizations the child has received, the health care provider will take a history. The parent and health care provider will work together to collect the immunization information. In extreme situations, where no information can be collected, the immunization series may be reinitiated.

**DOSES DISTRIBUTED**

The state distributed more than 2,665,398 million doses of vaccines through the Universal Childhood Vaccination program in calendar year 1998.

**FINANCING**

This program is funded through federal and state appropriations in the following amounts for SFY 97-98:

Federal: \$ 6,215,451 (used to support operating costs)  
State: \$11,921,919 (used to purchase vaccines for children not eligible for federally purchased vaccines)

In addition, the federal government supplies the state with the vaccines for eligible children covered by this program. Children eligible for federally supplied vaccines include children on Medicaid, the uninsured, Native Americans, and children served by Community and Migrant health centers. The cost of this vaccine to the federal government was \$16,655,543.

**ADMINISTRATION**

The program is administered on the national level by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Immunization Program within the US Department of Health and Human Services. On the state level, the program is administered by the Immunization Branch, Women's and Children's Health Section, NC Department of Health and Human Services. At the local level, vaccinations are available through local Health Departments, Community, Migrant and Rural Health Centers, and most private physician's offices.

**SOURCES OF LAW** State statute: NCGS 130A-152(a)  
State regulations: 15 NCAC 19A-0401 (recommended vaccinations)

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION** Immunization Branch  
Women's and Children's Health Section  
NC Department of Health and Human Services  
PO Box 29597  
Raleigh, NC 27626  
919-733-7752  
1-800-344-0569  
  
CARELINE: 1-800-662-7030  
  
1-800-FOR-BABY