



Frequently Asked Questions on Immunization Registries (Parents)

What is an immunization registry?

An Immunization registry is a secure computer system that stores children's immunization (shot) records. It can only be used by doctors, hospitals, public health departments and other selected programs that serve children. It helps kids get their shots on time and stay healthy. All 50 states have immunization registries.

Why should my child's information be included in the registry?

A registry can help protect your child's health. A doctor can use the registry to send reminders so your child doesn't miss shots. Your doctor's office can also quickly and easily give you a shot record ("yellow card") for school entry, camp, sports teams or other reasons. A complete record saves you the time and cost of extra doctor appointments, and your child won't need to repeat shots.

What if I lose my child's yellow card or forget it at home?

If you ever leave your child's record card at home the day of the appointment, the doctor should have all the information from the registry. If the card is lost, the doctor's office can quickly print out another copy for you.

What information goes in the registry?

Information in the registry would include your child's name and birth date, mother's (or guardian's) name, and information about the child's shots. Only your child's doctors can access your child's address and phone number; schools and other programs serving your child cannot see addresses or phone numbers in the registry.

I worry about privacy. Besides the doctor and the office medical staff, who else can see my child's information in the registry?

The registry is safe and private. By law, it can be used only by authorized people in the medical office or health plan that serve your child. In addition, schools, childcare centers, WIC programs, foster care agencies, and other programs can be authorized to look up shot records—but only for the children they serve. The registry can only be used to check shot records, see what shots are due, and see how many children need shots.

Do I have to have my child's information in the registry?

The choice is up to you. Parents are always informed before their children's information is added to the registry. As a parent, you have the right to decide: 1) not to share your child's shot records in the registry, and 2) if you want to get reminders for shot appointments. The registry is a good way for parents to help keep their kids healthy.

Can I change my mind about agreeing to participate?

Of course! You can ask to stop sharing your child's information in the registry at any time. You can also decide to start sharing your child's information even if you said no before.

Can I see my child's information in the registry?

By law, you have the right to see information about your child that's in the registry and to ask the medical office to make needed corrections.

What if I move or change doctors?

The registry keeps all your child's shot records in one place. If your child sees different doctors, changes health plans or moves nearby, the shot record will follow. Within the next few years, any participating California health care provider who takes care of your child will be able to find the complete shot record in the registry. If you move to a very different part of the state (or outside of California), ask your doctor for a current copy of your child's record card so you can give this to the new doctor.

How long is my child's immunization record kept and available?

Registries usually keep records until at least age 21, so the shot history will be available for college, foreign travel, military service or other needs.

Where can I get reliable information about vaccines?

There is a lot about vaccines on the Internet. Reliable sources include:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics: www.cispimmunize.org/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Vaccine Information page: www.cdc.gov/vaccines
- Immunization Action Coalition: www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4017.htm