

MODULE 4 – ACIP and VFC Vaccines



<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/default.htm>

ACIP and its Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is a federal advisory committee that was established in 1964 to provide advice and guidance on the most effective means to prevent vaccine-preventable diseases. In 1993, Congress gave ACIP unique statutory authority to determine recommendations for the routine administration of vaccines to children and adults in the civilian population; these recommendations include age for vaccine administration number of doses and dosing interval, and precautions and contraindications. The ACIP is the only entity in the federal government that makes such recommendations. The overall goals of the ACIP are to provide advice that will assist the Department of Health and Human Services and the nation in reducing the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases and to increase the safe use of vaccines and related biological products.

The ACIP consists of 15 experts in fields associated with immunization and infectious diseases, including the chair. The Committee also includes eight nonvoting ex-officio members and several nonvoting liaison representatives from other health organizations. Major functions of the ACIP are as follows:

- Develops technical recommendations on vaccine use and immunization practices;
- Approves vaccines to be provided for the VFC program;
- Recommends immunization schedules that are harmonized with recommendations of other advisory groups, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

The ACIP process to add or revise the U. S. immunization schedule is lengthy and deliberate. It can begin 2 to 5 years prior to licensure of a particular vaccine. Workgroups headed by ACIP members work with CDC staff and other consultants to examine issues around particular vaccines or disease epidemiology and present this information to the full ACIP membership several times throughout the year. Focused policy options, science and other information supporting these policy choices are presented to, deliberated upon, and voted on by ACIP members in open public meetings. Final immunization recommendations are published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* when approved by the ACIP and the Director of CDC.

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ACIP's Role in the VFC Program

ACIP's statutory authority includes the authority to determine the vaccines, number of doses, schedule, and contraindications for the VFC program as well as for the general population. ACIP is therefore legislatively linked to the VFC Program. The Committee also approves the specific recommendations for inclusion of a vaccine in the VFC Program, which are written in the form of a VFC resolution. After the ACIP recommends a new vaccine or a change in vaccine use, a VFC resolution is voted upon for inclusion of the vaccine in the VFC program. VFC resolutions passed by the ACIP form the basis for VFC program policies on vaccine availability and use. CDC contracts for vaccines available through the VFC program are established only after a VFC resolution is in place. VFC vaccines must be administered according to the guidelines outlined by the ACIP in the VFC resolutions. These consolidated resolutions are placed on the VFC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/acip-vfc-resolutions.htm>) soon after ACIP approval.

ACIP-Approved Vaccines and Biologicals Available through the VFC Program

The most current list of vaccines available through the VFC program can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/parents/apprvd-vaccs.htm>