


Erica Pan, MD, MPH
Director and State Public Health Officer

Gavin Newsom
Governor

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TO: California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program Providers

FROM: Robert Schechter, M.D., Chief 
Center for Infectious Diseases
Division of Communicable Disease Control, Immunization Branch

SUBJECT: Guidance on Combined Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Varicella (MMRV)
Vaccine Recommendations and Coverage

Highlights



- CDPH continues to recommend either MMRV or separate MMR and varicella vaccines for children younger than 4 years.
- MMRV doses for ages younger than 4 years are covered by Medi-Cal.
- An updated VFC resolution reflecting contrasting ACIP recommendations states that VFC doses of MMRV are for VFC-eligible patients age 4–12 years.

Summary

Measles is extremely contagious, infecting up to 90% of non-immune contacts. Vaccination remains the best protection against measles, with 2 doses being up to 97% effective at preventing the infection. Cases of measles have been increasing in the United States in unvaccinated children, including fatal cases, underscoring the importance of vaccination.

CDPH Measles Vaccine Recommendations Remain the Same

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), continues to recommend either the combined Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Varicella (MMRV) vaccine or separate MMR and varicella vaccines as options for children under 4 years of age. CDPH and ACIP vaccine recommendations since 2009 note a very small increased risk of febrile seizures when combination MMRV is given as the first dose as compared to separate MMR and varicella vaccines (0.08% after MMRV vs. 0.04% after separate MMR and varicella). This risk is not seen after subsequent doses of MMRV. In comparison, febrile seizures occur in 2-5% of all children for other reasons without lasting effects on their health. Some parents prefer the MMRV vaccine as the first dose to minimize

the number of injections for their children. CDPH immunization recommendations are available at the [Public Health for All](#) website.

VFC Resolution Limits MMRV to Ages 4+ Years – Medi-Cal Reimbursing Purchase Cost for Younger Ages

In contrast to CDPH, on September 18-19, 2025, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to recommend that MMRV vaccine be administered only to children 4 years of age and older. For children younger than 4 years, ACIP recommends giving separate MMR and varicella vaccines. As a result, the [national VFC program resolution for MMRV was updated in December 2025](#), **limiting VFC doses of MMRV to VFC-eligible children age 4 years through 12 years**. Nevertheless, CDPH continues to recommend either MMRV or separate MMR and varicella vaccines as options for children younger than 4 years of age.

For children insured by Medi-Cal, Medi-Cal will reimburse VFC providers for privately purchased doses of MMRV administered to VFC-eligible children younger than 4 years of age, including retroactive reimbursement for dose administered since December 12, 2025. The Medi-Cal system configuration for claims is forthcoming, but [initial details are now available](#).

VFC-eligible children who are uninsured, underinsured, or American Indian/Alaska Native children may not be billed for the cost of MMRV or other vaccines.

For children covered by private insurance regulated by the State of California, [AB 144](#) requires coverage of all immunizations recommended by CDPH, including MMRV for children younger than 4 years.

VFC Orders

Existing inventory and future orders of VFC MMRV vaccine should be for VFC-eligible patients 4-12 years or age, in accordance with the updated VFC Resolution. If you need additional VFC doses of separate MMR and varicella vaccines for your patients younger than 4 years of age, place an order in [myCAvax](#), even if it is not yet time for your routine VFC order. If prompted to answer why you are ordering outside of your routine frequency, select "Other" and enter in the comments "ordering separate MMR and varicella due to updated VFC resolution."

Resources

- [CDPH's Public Health for All Website](#)
- [CDPH's AB144 Immunization Coverage Information](#)
- [Medi-Cal VFC and MMRV Vaccine Communication](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics Childhood Immunization Schedule](#)