

Tips for Locating Old Immunization Records

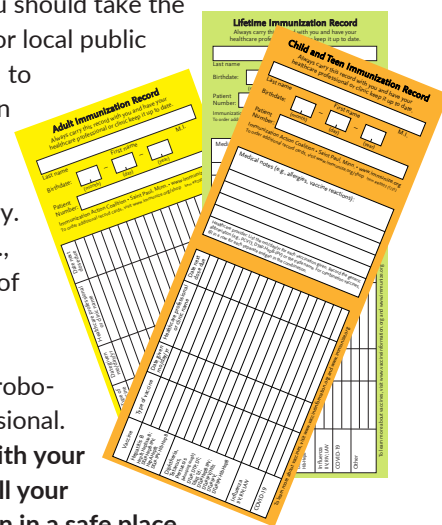
Immunization records often are needed for entry into childcare, schools, camps, and new jobs, as well as travel abroad. If you are seeing a new healthcare provider, you will need this information to ensure you receive proper medical care. Providers usually count only those vaccine doses that are documented in a written record or a state or local online immunization information system (known as an "IIS," or registry). No national registry maintains this information. So, if immunization records are lost or not available, you or your child may need to repeat vaccine doses. Here are some ideas that might help you piece together old immunization records.

PLACES YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK:

- **All previous healthcare providers** – Don't forget vaccination visits you made to local public health departments or neighborhood clinics. When physicians retire or a medical practice changes hands, old patient records may be sent to a medical record storage company. You may be able to obtain records directly from the company for a fee.
- **Your home** – Look through your old papers, including baby books and school or camp forms. If you're an adult, ask your parents if they still have your childhood records.
- **State or local IIS (or registry)** – All states and some cities have centralized registries of vaccine records. These may not include all ages or all records, but this is a good place to check. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lists registry contacts and websites at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/iis/contacts-locate-records.html.
- **Schools and colleges or other post-secondary institutions** you or your child attended.
- **Previous employers**, including the military.
- To get the phone number of your local health department, call the CDC Information Contact Center at 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).

WHEN YOU FIND YOUR RECORDS

Congratulations! Now you should take the records to your provider or local public health clinic and ask them to document this information on an official record, and, if possible, in the state or local immunization registry. Many schools, camps, etc., will accept only this type of "provider-verified" record because this ensures the information has been corroborated by a medical professional. **Be sure to keep a copy with your home records and place all your supporting documentation in a safe place where you can find it. It is a good idea to take a picture of records with a smartphone or scan and save a copy electronically.**



WHAT IF YOU DON'T FIND YOUR RECORDS?

If records are lost, both children and adults may need to repeat some vaccines. Although this is time-consuming and inconvenient, it is not harmful to receive additional vaccine doses. Blood tests can help determine if you're already immune to certain diseases. Your healthcare provider can help you develop a plan.

FOR THE FUTURE...

- To avoid hunting for old records and repeating doses, remember to bring your or your child's immunization record card to every healthcare visit.
- Keep all vaccine records in your wallet, a vinyl sleeve, or a sealable plastic bag.
- Keep a back-up copy with your important records, including an electronic copy or digital photo.
- Make sure all vaccines you are given are documented in your record or a supplemental record.
- Ask that your vaccines also be documented in your state or local immunization registry.

Remember, you need to rely on **you** to keep these records. This will help you save time, reduce hassles, and be ready to provide your immunization history whenever it's needed in the future!

