



Virginia Medical Freedom Guide for Parents & Citizens Your Rights in Virginia: What You Need to Know

As a Virginia parent or citizen, you have choices when it comes to vaccinations for yourself and your children. This guide explains your rights, the exemption process, and helpful additional resources.

I. Vaccination Exemption Types: An Overview¹

- Medical Exemption: When a licensed physician, licensed nurse practitioner, or local health department determines a vaccine may be medically detrimental.
- Religious Exemption: When vaccination conflicts with your religious tenets or practices.
- Full Vaccination: When one follows the state-required immunization schedule.

II. Medical Exemptions in Virginia²

A. When to Use This Option

- You may request a medical exemption if a licensed physician, licensed advanced practice registered nurse (APRN), or local health department certifies that one or more required immunizations may be detrimental to your child's or a household member's health.

B. Requirements

- A medical exemption must:
 - Be provided in writing by a licensed physician, licensed nurse practitioner, or local health department.
 - State the specific vaccine(s) that may be medically detrimental.

¹National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). (2025). [State Non-Medical Exemptions From School Immunization Requirements](#)

²12 Va. Admin. Code [§ 5-110-80](#).

- Indicate the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstance that contraindicates immunization.
- Schools and child-care facilities are required to accept a valid medical exemption.

III. Religious Exemptions in Virginia³

A. When to Use This Option

- You may request a religious exemption if vaccination conflicts with your religious tenets or practices.

B. Step-by-Step Process

1. Download Virginia's official exemption [Form CRE-1 \(Certificate of Religious Exemption\)](#) from the [Virginia Department of Health \(VDH\)](#).
 - You may also pick up a physical copy of Form CRE-1 at the following locations in your area:
 - Any [Local Health Department](#)
 - Your local [Department of Social services](#)
 - Your specific school division's superintendent's office
2. Complete the form with the student's name, date of birth, and student ID number, and identify the specific vaccines you are declining.
3. Have the form notarized by a Virginia notary public (in-person or remote online notarization is accepted under Virginia law).⁴
4. Submit the completed, notarized form to the admitting official of your child's school or child-care provider.
5. Renew as required. Confirm renewal requirements with VDH or your school division annually.

Important Note: During an official disease outbreak or public health emergencies declared by Virginia health officials, unvaccinated students, including those with exemptions, may be temporarily excluded from school.

³12 Va. Admin. Code [§ 5-110-80](#).

⁴Ibid; Commonwealth of Virginia. [Certificate of Religious Exemption, Form CRE-1](#); Va. Code Ann. [§§ 47.1-2, 47.1-16](#).

IV. School Immunization Requirements by Grade Level⁵

Virginia requires students to provide proof of immunization or a valid exemption. Key vaccine requirements include:

- Pre-K & Elementary
 - DTap (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
 - Polio
 - MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
 - Hepatitis A
 - Hepatitis B
 - Varicella (or documented history of chickenpox)
 - Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (Hib) for ages under 5
- 7th Grade
 - Tdap booster
 - Meningococcal (MenACWY) — first dose prior to 7th grade, after age 11
 - HPV vaccine series (parental opt-out available — see note below)
- 12th Grade
 - Meningococcal (MenACWY) booster — one dose after age 16
- College Students
 - First-time, full-time students at Virginia public baccalaureate institutions must either receive meningococcal and hepatitis B vaccines, sign the statutory waiver, or qualify for a religious or medical exemption under Virginia law.⁶

Note on HPV Vaccine: Because HPV is not communicable in a school setting, a parent or guardian may elect, at their sole discretion, for their child not to receive the HPV vaccine after reviewing Board of Health-approved educational materials. No exemption form is required to decline the HPV vaccine.

⁵Virginia Department of Health. (2026). [School & Day Care Minimum Immunization Requirements](#)

⁶Va. Code Ann. [§ 23.1-800\(C\)–\(D\)](#).

V. Constitutional, Federal, and Employment Protections

A. Constitutional Protections

- The [First Amendment](#) guarantees your right to religious exercise. Courts have consistently held that government policies cannot favor secular motivations over religious ones.

B. Federal Civil Rights & Employment Protections

- Under [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act](#), employers must consider requests for religious accommodation related to vaccination.
- An employer must grant an accommodation unless doing so would create an undue hardship on the business.
- The U.S. [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#) enforces these protections.

C. Key Legal Principles⁷

- Your belief must be sincerely held and religious in nature.
- You may need to explain how your beliefs conflict with a vaccination requirement.
- Employers must evaluate each request individually; blanket or automatic denials are not permitted.
- An employer may deny a request only if it can demonstrate undue hardship.

VI. Tips for Parents & Citizens

A. Documentation

- Keep copies (digital and printed) of all exemption forms.
- Photograph or scan forms before submitting them.
- Ask the school for a dated receipt.

Note: Religious exemptions from other states do not transfer to Virginia. A new Virginia CRE-1 must be completed and notarized.⁸

B. Working With Schools

- Present your documentation clearly and respectfully.

⁷This document should not be construed as legal advice or guidance; consult a qualified attorney for advice specific to your situation.

⁸ Virginia Department of Health. (2026). [K-12 School Health Programs: Frequently Asked Questions](#).

- Understand that some staff may be unfamiliar with exemption rules; you may need to reference VDH guidance or [12VAC5-110-80](#).
- If necessary, request to speak with an administrator.

C. Notarization Options

- Banks
- Credit unions
- UPS/FedEx stores
- Libraries
- Some remote online notaries

D. Reporting Issues

- If you experience any adverse effects from vaccines, report to [VAERS \(Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System\)](#). Document any pressure, coercion, or discrimination related to vaccine status.

VII. **Frequently Asked Questions⁹**

1. Can I pick and choose which vaccines to exempt?

Yes. You may exempt your child from specific vaccines while receiving others. You are not required to take an “all or nothing” approach.

2. Do I need to belong to a specific religion to claim a religious exemption?

No. Virginia allows exemptions when vaccination conflicts with your “religious tenets or practices.” You do not need to be affiliated with an organized religion to qualify.

3. How long does the exemption process take?

You may download and complete Form CRE-1 immediately from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). The timeline depends on how quickly you fill out, notarize, and return the form.

4. Where do I submit my exemption form?

Submit the completed, notarized CRE-1 to the admitting official at your child’s school or child-care facility. For questions, contact VDH Division of Immunization at 1-800-568-1929 (in-state) or 804-864-8055.

⁹This document is for general education only and not legal or medical advice. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider for medical decisions and a licensed attorney for legal questions. Verify all laws and agency policies before acting.

5. Can schools reject my exemption?

Schools and child-care facilities must accept a valid, properly completed and notarized CRE-1. If you encounter difficulties, contact Virginia VDH or seek legal assistance for support.

6. What happens if we move to another school in Virginia?

Your exemption transfers with your child's school records. Confirm with the receiving school that the CRE-1 on file remains current.

7. What if we move from another state?

Religious exemptions issued in other states do not transfer to Virginia. You must complete a new Virginia CRE-1 and have it notarized upon enrolling in a Virginia school.

8. Can my child be conditionally enrolled?

Yes. Children may be conditionally admitted for up to 90 days while exemption documentation is being submitted or completed.

VIII. Helpful Resources & Websites¹⁰

- **Official Virginia Resources**

- [Virginia VDH Division of Immunization](#)
- [Download CRE-1 Exemption Form](#)
- [Virginia Immunization Information System](#) (Immunization Records)
- VDH Division of Immunization phone number: 1-800-568-1929 (in-state) or 804-864-8055

- **Advocacy Organizations**

- [Virginia Medical Freedom Alliance](#)

- **Legal & Educational Resources**

- [National Vaccine Information Center](#)
- [Children's Health Defense](#)
- [The Healthy American](#)
- [America's Frontline Doctors](#)

¹⁰The inclusion of outside resources should not imply endorsement and instead are exclusively provided for informational purposes.

- **Federal Government Resources**
 - [CDC Vaccine Information](#)
 - [VAERS](#)