



CIRTS

Frequently Asked Questions

A publication of the Connecticut Department of Health
www.dph.state.ct.us

1. What is CIRTS?

In 1994, the Connecticut legislature authorized the Department of Public Health to establish a computerized registry of preschool-aged children and their immunization records. The purpose of the registry is to assure that children remain up-to-date with their immunizations and that their vaccination records are available when they need them - when changing doctors and at the time of daycare and school entry. After a pilot period of several years, the Connecticut Immunization Registry and Tracking System (CIRTS) went statewide in 1998.

For Parents ...

2. What are the benefits of CIRTS for Parents and Children?

Research has shown that both parents and physicians overestimate the rates at which children are fully immunized. Parents are often unaware of immunization schedule recommendations and physicians often overlook 1-2 vaccinations. This is becoming an increasing problem with the rapid changes in vaccination recommendations for children. CIRTS can:


- Give you easy access to a permanent record of your child's shots even if you move away from CT or your baby's doctor retires.
- Let a doctor find your child's history in a computerized database if you forget the record or have difficulty obtaining it.
- Give you the official forms needed of your child's immunizations for daycare, school or camp.


3. Is my child enrolled?

If your child was born in the state of Connecticut since January 1, 1998, he/she was enrolled at time of birth through birth certificate information. Parents may elect not to have their children enrolled by signing a refusal portion of a brochure that is mailed to your home shortly after birth and sending it to the Department of Public Health.

If your child was born OUTSIDE of Connecticut, there is a chance that he or she was enrolled in the pediatrician's office. Or, if a member of a Medicaid Managed Care plan, your child would have been enrolled into CIRTS at the time of enrollment into the plan. If you are unsure if your child is in CIRTS, call us at (860) 509-7929.

4. How can I enroll my child if he or she is not currently in CIRTS?

 Download an English-language enrollment form here
http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/cirts/CIRTS_ENROLLMENT_Rev_APIRL_07_ENG.pdf

 Download a Spanish-language enrollment form here:
http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/cirts/CIRTS_ENROLLMENT_Rev_APIRL_07_SPAN.pdf

Send the completed form to:

State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health
410 Capitol Avenue, MS #11MUN
Hartford, CT 06134
Attn: CIRTS

Fax: (860) 509-8370

5. Who has access to the information in CIRTS?

CT state law requires that information in CIRTS be kept confidential. Only you, your doctor, or health care workers who can assist you with missed appointments or missed immunizations have access to CIRTS. The information will not be shared with any other people or any other agency.


6. How can I obtain my child's immunization history?

By calling the State Immunization Program at the Department of Public Health at (860) 509-7929, with proper identification you can receive a free copy of your child's immunization history at any time.

For Pediatric Practices ...

7. Are practices that administer vaccines required to report to CIRTS?

Yes. Public Act 94-90 states that all offices that administer vaccines to children must report them to the state registry.

 Click here for regulations:


<http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/cirts/Regs.pdf>

8. Will reporting to CIRTS violate HIPAA requirements?

No. Physicians are authorized to disclose immunization histories to the CIRTS program and its authorized agents without patient authorization or opportunity to object because:

- It is required by law
- It is part of public health activities

The information that we request is what is minimally necessary to satisfy the objective of the state registry. Practices should however, keep an accounting of each disclosure that is made to CIRTS.

 For more information:

http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/cirts/HIPAA_Memo_to_Practices.pdf

9. How are vaccination histories of patients reported to CIRTS?

Each month, CIRTS sends a report to each pediatric practice asking for immunization histories on kids who have turned 7 and 19 months of age. These are two key times when immunization status should be reviewed.

Similarly, a 2-year-old clean up report, known as the “Goldenrod” report is also sent each year as a last effort to try to bring your 2-year-old population up-to-date with their immunizations.

10. How is the immunization rate for our practice determined?

Immunization coverage reports are generated for all CT practices based on a child's immunization status on their 2nd birthday. Up-to-date coverage is defined as 4 DTaP, 3 polio, 1 MMR on or after the first birthday, 3 hepatitis B (with the 3rd dose given after 24 weeks of age), Hib given age appropriately, and Varicella on or after the first birthday.

11. I thought our practices immunization rate was a lot higher. What would contribute to a rate being lower than we expected?

Sometimes children in your practice are up-to-date with their immunizations but were not up-to-date at the time they turned 2 years of age. CIRTS uses this age as a cut-off, as all children should be series complete by the time they turn 2 years of age.

Another significant reason for a lower than expected rate is invalid doses. Below are the most commonly administered invalid doses of vaccine:

- MMR not given on or after 12 months of age
- Hib not on or after 12 months of age
- Hep B #3 not given on or after 6 months

And, finally, a third reason can be attributed to lack of reminder and recall to the well-child visit. All too often it is found that the DTaP #4 and the IPV #3 are not given, suggesting that the older infant is not coming back to the office.

We can provide you with a more detailed explanation of your rates upon request. Call (860) 509-7929.


12. My office is extremely busy and short-staffed. Is there anyone I can call to assist with CIRTS reporting requirements?

Immunization Action Plan Coordinators, or IAP's are people contracted through the State Health Department to raise immunization rates in target areas of the state that are at risk for being under-immunized. There are 18 IAP areas in the state of CT. One of the ways IAP's help to raise rates is to help the pediatric providers in their offices. IAP's can:

- Identify children from monthly compliancy reports who are late with immunizations;
- Help to create reminder and recall systems for families that have not scheduled an appointment or have missed one;

- Conduct outreach on hard-to-reach kids in need of immunizations (i.e. phone calls, post cards, home visits);
- Identify the correct primary care provider when the office has not seen the child in their office;

IAP Coordinators are also a local resource for the latest information on immunization. They will provide you with regular updates on new recommendations, new vaccines, changes in the law, new VIS statements, etc.

 For a list of IAP coordinators in the state, click here:
<http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/cirts/iapcoord.pdf>

13. What are the benefits of CIRTS to our pediatric practice?

- Immunization histories on patients who transfer to your practice from any; other pediatric facility in the state
- Easy access to the first hepatitis B shot given in the birth hospital

Coming Soon...

- A list of kids in your practice who are missing any vaccine at any time;
- Automatically generated recall notices to parents of those children who are behind and reminder notices for upcoming appointments;
- Printouts of official school “blue” forms, day care forms and camp forms with all given immunizations documented;
- Determinations of immunization coverage levels for your practice;
- Electronically order vaccines and report doses administered

14. What are the hardware requirements for running this application in my office?

- Internet Service (i.e. AOL, Earthlink, NetZero, MSN, etc.);
- Pentium II or higher;
- 128 megabytes RAM for Windows 98, SE, 2000, XP, or ME;


- 10 megabytes free space;
- 56KBS, DSL, or cable modem

15. What is the cost of using CIRTS in my office?


The only cost associated with using CIRTS is the monthly fee of your Internet service provider (ISP).

16. How will my practice get online with CIRTS?

Call CIRTS at (860) 509-7929. An installation and training will be scheduled

 Remote site questionnaire:

http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/cirts/REMOTE_SITE_QUESTIONNAIRE_FOB.pdf

 Statement of confidentiality:

http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/cirts/CIRTS_Confidentiality_Form_for_Staff.pdf

17. How will my practice get connected to CIRTS?

An icon will be set up on the PCs of your choice, and you will be connected through the Internet.

18. What will be required of our practice once we are online?

You may use CIRTS as a look-up database. If you choose to go on-line, you will be one of the first practices to be connected to our new web-enabled registry. More details to come..