

In your work as a local public health nurse, you may encounter patients who have questions about vaccines and vaccine exemptions. Many times, these questions can be hard to answer. This one-pager will provide details on what the current exemptions are and how to answer questions about them with patients.

Medical Exemptions

State law indicates that individuals can decline a vaccine if they have a medical reason, such as an allergic reaction. All medical exemptions must be approved by a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO) with an active medical license.

All exemptions must be documented on a state form and on file with the state and the school nurse at the child's school. Medical letters are required to be filed every year.

Religious Exemptions

State law indicates that parents can request religious exemptions if their religious beliefs contradict vaccination. There is no specific form required, and parents can submit letters or documentation indicating they have a religious exemption to one or all vaccines.

These letters must be documented with the school nurse's office at the child's school. These letters are also only required once throughout the child's schooling.

here's what to say:

- Medical exemptions are typically needed for individuals who have allergic reactions or are immunocompromised and who may not be able to have a specific vaccine.
- If a specific vaccine is needed on the medical exemption, continue to still encourage other vaccinations. You can use the [4A method by Voices for Vaccines](#) to ask questions and educate the patient or family.

here's what to say:

- Religious exemptions are unique in that families are not required to disclose their specific religious beliefs - often, they won't.
- As a provider, you can ask permission to ask questions and educate on why these exemptions may be dangerous.