



Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccines for Children

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have recently approved and recommended the Pfizer and BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11.

Who is eligible for the pediatric COVID-19 vaccine?

All children ages 5-11 are eligible to receive the pediatric COVID-19 vaccine. Children ages 12-17 are eligible to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine authorized for adults.

The COVID-19 vaccine is **FREE** to all people living in the U.S., regardless of their immigration or health insurance status.



What is the difference between the pediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and the adult Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine?

The pediatric vaccine (for ages 5-11) is the same vaccine as that for persons ages 12 and older, but at a lower dose. Both vaccines come in a two-dose series given three weeks apart.

Is the vaccine safe for children 5-11 years old?

Thousands of children received the vaccine during clinical trials. The data collected during those trials proves that the vaccine is both safe and effective. The most common side effects include pain at the injection site, headache, fever, and chills in the two days post-vaccination.

How well does the vaccine work?

Clinical trials conducted on children ages 5-11 have shown 90.7% efficacy in fighting COVID-19. The vaccine produces a strong immune response in children which helps prevent serious illness from the virus.

Why should children get vaccinated for COVID-19?

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine can help protect children ages 5 years and older from getting COVID-19 or its variants.

- Vaccinating children can help protect family members, including siblings who are not eligible for vaccination and family members who may be at increased risk of getting very sick if they are infected.
- Vaccination can also help protect children from both short-term complications like hospitalization and long-term health complications due to COVID-19.
- Vaccinating children ages 5 years and older can help keep them in school and help them safely participate in sports, playdates, and other group activities.

We know that many parents are trying to decide what is right for their child and their family. If you have questions about your child and the COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your child's pediatrician to get trusted, personalized medical advice.

Do children younger than 12 years old need to be vaccinated? Are they at increased risk of getting sick from COVID-19?

With many children back in school and participating in extracurricular activities, COVID-19 vaccination among children ages 5 through 11 years is critical to preventing infection and possible severe disease, as well as reducing the spread of COVID-19. There are approximately 28 million children between the ages of 5 and 11 in the United States, and there have been nearly 2 million cases of COVID-19 within this age group during the pandemic. While fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus, and there is no way to tell in advance if a child will get a severe or mild case. Some children have developed a rare but serious disease that is linked to COVID-19 called multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C).

Where will vaccines for younger children be available?

Finding available COVID-19 vaccines for anyone 5 years and older is convenient. Pharmacies and HRSA sites, including Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), and Community Health Centers are being leveraged to administer COVID-19 vaccine to children who may not seek service in a pediatric practice. FQHCs, pharmacies, public health, and pediatric provider networks can partner with schools and communities to host pediatric vaccination clinics. These vaccine providers can encourage school-based and extracurricular vaccination for younger school-aged children to hold targeted programs to ensure equity and coverage.

Vaccines.gov will list doctor's offices, local pharmacies, healthcare clinics, and local health departments where vaccine is available. This free resource provides accurate and up-to-date information about vaccination services in your area. You can also text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you in the U.S.

How does dosage work for children? What should a parent do if a child turns 12 after they get their first dose of the pediatric vaccine but before the second dose is due?

As opposed to many medications, vaccine dosages are based on age and not size or weight. If a child turns from 11 to 12 years of age in between their first and second dose and receives the pediatric Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for their second dose, they do not need to repeat the dose.

Is there a fertility/development concern with vaccinating children before they reach puberty?

No. There is no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, can cause female or male fertility problems.

How will vaccine safety be monitored in this age group?

COVID-19 vaccines have undergone – and will continue to undergo – the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. CDC and FDA will continue to monitor safety using our established and new safety monitoring systems. Parents/caregivers can enroll their child in v-safe, a free and easy-to-use smartphone-based app, where they can complete health check-ins after COVID-19 vaccination and report how their child is feeling after vaccination. Additionally, patients, caregivers, and vaccine providers are also asked to report adverse events after vaccination to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), even if it is not clear that the vaccine caused the adverse event. CDC reviews all of the information and reports any serious adverse reactions.

Is it safe to co-administer COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines, like flu?

Yes, if a patient is eligible, both flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same visit, as recommended by CDC and ACIP. In addition to flu vaccine, COVID-19 vaccine can be given with other vaccines as well.

Will COVID-19 vaccines for children be free?

Yes, COVID-19 vaccines are available for everyone at no cost, including the Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years. COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be given to all eligible people living in the United States, regardless of insurance or immigration status.

Will children younger than 12 receive a vaccine card?

Yes, all vaccine recipients, including children ages 5 through 11 years, will receive a CDC vaccination card upon initial vaccination.