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COVID-19 VACCINES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

The following information comes from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC).

Most Children and All Teens Can Get COVID-19 Vaccines

The CDC recommends everyone ages 5 and older receive a COVID-19 vaccine to help protect against COVID-19.

Widespread vaccination for COVID-19 is a critical tool to best protect everyone, especially those at the highest risk, from severe illness and death. People who are fully vaccinated can safely resume many activities that they did prior to the pandemic. Children ages 5 years and older are able to get an age-appropriate dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Learn more about what you and your child or teen can do when fully vaccinated.

Authorized for	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	Johnson & Johnson
4 years and under	No	No	No
5-11 years old	Yes	No	No
12-17 years old	Yes	No	No
18 years and older	Yes	Yes	Yes

Why Children and Teens Should Get Vaccinated for COVID-19

While COVID-19 tends to be milder in children compared with adults, it can make children very sick and cause them to be hospitalized. In some situations, complications from infection can lead to death.

Although children are at a lower risk of becoming severely ill with COVID-19 compared with adults, children can:

- Be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19
- Get very sick from COVID-19
- Have both short and long-term health complications from COVID-19
- Spread COVID-19 to others

Children with [underlying medical conditions](#) are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to children without underlying medical conditions.

Children who become infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 can also develop serious complications like multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C)—a condition where different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes or gastrointestinal organs.



Vaccinating your children can also help protect the whole family.

- 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.
- Vaccinating children can also help keep them from getting seriously sick even if they do get 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.

COVID-19 Vaccines Are Safe for Children and Teens

COVID-19 vaccines are being monitored for safety with the most comprehensive and intense safety monitoring program in U.S. history. The CDC monitors the safety of all COVID-19 vaccines after the vaccines are authorized or approved for use; this includes tracking the risk of myocarditis in children ages 5 through 11 years.

- Your child may get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines, including the flu vaccine, at the same time.
- Serious health events after COVID-19 vaccination are rare.
- Cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart) have been reported after the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccination of children ages 12-17 years. These reactions are rare; in one study, the risk of myocarditis after the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech in the week following vaccination was around 54 cases per million doses administered to males aged 12-17 years.
- A severe allergic reaction, like anaphylaxis, may happen after any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines, but this is rare.

- Your child cannot get COVID-19 from any COVID-19 vaccine, including the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Learn more about how messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines, like the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, work.
- There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems.

COVID-19 Vaccine Dosage and Administration

- Adolescents ages 12 years and older receive the same dosage of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine as adults.
- Children ages 5 through 11 years receive one-third of the adult dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Smaller needles, designed specifically for children, are used for children ages 5 through 11 years.
- COVID-19 vaccine dosage does not vary by patient weight but by age on the day of vaccination.
- Your child will need a second shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine three weeks after their first shot.

Preparing Children and Teens for Vaccination

The experience of getting a COVID-19 vaccine will be very similar to the experience of getting routine vaccines. Use the CDC's [tips to support your child before, during, and after routine vaccinations](#) when they get a COVID-19 vaccine.

- Talk to your child before vaccination about [what to expect](#).
- Avoid giving pain relievers before vaccination to try to prevent side effects.
- Tell the doctor or nurse about any allergies your child may have.
- Keep your child seated or lying down during vaccination, and for 15 minutes after the vaccine is given, to prevent fainting.
- Remain at the vaccine site for 15-30 minutes after the COVID-19 shot so your child can be observed in case they have a severe allergic reaction and need immediate treatment.

After Your Child's COVID-19 Vaccination

Possible [side effects](#) on the arm where your child got the shot:

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling

Possible side effects on the rest of their body:

- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Nausea

These side effects may affect your child's ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Some people have no side effects and severe allergic reactions are rare. If your child experiences a severe allergic reaction after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, vaccine providers can rapidly provide care and call for emergency medical services if needed.

Ask your child's health care provider for advice on using a nonaspirin pain reliever and other steps you can take at home after your child gets vaccinated. In general, aspirin is not recommended for use in children and adolescents less than 18 years of age. Placing a cool, damp cloth on the injection site can help with discomfort.

Conclusion

The federal government is providing the COVID-19 vaccine free of charge to all people living in the United States, regardless of their immigration or health insurance status. Vaccination is extremely important for protecting children and teens against COVID-19.

Parents are urged to speak with their children's pediatricians about vaccinations right away.

Here are methods for locating vaccination sites near you:

- Search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233.

- Check with your child's health care provider about whether they offer COVID-19 vaccination.
- Check your local pharmacy's website to see if vaccination walk-ins or appointments are available for children.
- Contact your state, territorial, local or tribal health department for more information.

Visit the [CDC website](#) for more information.