COVID-19

COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens
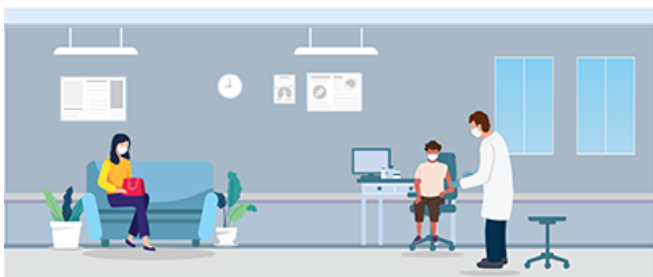
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Most Children and All Teens Can Get COVID–19 Vaccines

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

Authorized For	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	J&J / Janssen
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

Widespread vaccination for COVID-19 is a critical tool to best protect everyone, especially those at 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 Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Learn more about what you and your child or teen can do when fully vaccinated.

Find a COVID–19 Vaccine for Children 5 Years and Older

- 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.
- Check with your child's healthcare 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.

Find a COVID-19 vaccine: Search vaccines.gov, text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you.

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 children to be hospitalized. In some situations, the 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 with children without underlying medical conditions. Children who get 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.

Help Protect Your Child, Your Family, and Others

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

- 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 keep children 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.

Help protect your whole family and slow the spread of COVID-19 in your community by getting yourself and your children ages 5 years and older vaccinated against COVID-19.

Protect Unvaccinated Children
Unvaccinated children ages 2 years and older should wear a mask in public spaces and around people they don't live with. Learn more about protecting unvaccinated family members.

COVID-19 Vaccines Are Safe for Children and Teens

Before recommending COVID-19 vaccination for children, scientists conducted clinical trials. The FDA gave the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine emergency authorization to use in children ages 5-15 years old and full approval to use in people ages 16 years and older. Learn more about the process of developing, authorizing, and approving COVID-19 vaccines.

The benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks. Get a COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 years and older as soon as you can.

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

- Your child may get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines, including 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 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 ages 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 mRNA vaccines, like the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines, work.
- There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems.

COVID–19 Vaccine Dosage and Administration for Children and Teens

- Adolescents ages 12 years and older receive the same dosage of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine as adults.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years has the same active ingredients as the vaccine given to adults and adolescents. However, children ages 5 through 11 years cannot get the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine given to adults and adolescents. In addition, children ages 5 through 11 years receive an age-appropriate dose that is one-third of the adult dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Smaller needles, designed specifically for children, are also used for children ages 5 through 11 years.
- Unlike many medications, 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 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 our 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.
- It is **not recommended** you give pain relievers before vaccination to try to prevent side effects.
- Tell the doctor or nurse about any allergies your child may have.
- To prevent fainting and injuries related to fainting, your child should be seated or lying down during vaccination and for 15 minutes after the vaccine is given.
- After your child's COVID-19 vaccination, you will be asked to stay for 15–30 minutes 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

Your child may have some side effects, which are normal signs that their body is building protection.

On the arm where your child got the shot:	Throughout the rest of their body:
 - Pain - Redness - Swelling	 - 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 healthcare provider for advice on using a non-aspirin 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.

Get Started with v-safe

Get started with v-safe, a free, easy-to-use, and confidential smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after your child receives a COVID-19 vaccination. Through v-safe, you can report how your child is feeling after getting vaccinated. **V-safe** also reminds you when to get your child's second dose. Learn more about v-safe and share this tool with other parents and caregivers to use after vaccination.

Related Pages

› Find a COVID-19 Vaccine

› Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines

› Myths and Facts About COVID-19 Vaccines

› Get Started with v-safe

› How mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines were Developed

› COVID-19 and Kids: How mRNA Vaccines Work

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