Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination for Children and Teens

Updated May 20, 2022

Learn about CDC's new COVID-19 booster guidance for people ages 5 years and older.

Below are answers to commonly asked questions about COVID-19 vaccination in children ages 5 through 11 years.

Have more questions? Visit FAQs about Vaccination.

Benefits of Vaccinating Your Child

Why should children ages 5 years and older get vaccinated against COVID-19?

The benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks.

Children who get COVID-19 can get very sick, can require treatment in a hospital, and in rare situations, can even die. After getting COVID-19, children and teens can also experience a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems. Getting eligible children vaccinated can help prevent them from getting really sick even if they do get infected and help prevent serious short- and long-term complications of COVID-19.

Vaccinating children can also keep them in school and daycare and safely participating in sports, playdates, and other group activities.

Related page:

- Why Children and Teens Should Get Vaccinated Against COVID-19

Are children and teens at risk of getting sick from COVID-19?

COVID-19 can make children and teens of any age very sick and sometimes requires treatment in a hospital. In rare situations, the complications from COVID-19 can lead to death. There is no way to tell in advance how children will be affected by COVID-19. Although children with underlying medical conditions are more likely to get severe COVID-19, healthy children without underlying conditions can also experience severe illness.

After getting COVID-19, children and teens can also experience a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems. These post-COVID conditions can be physical or mental, last for weeks and affect quality of life.

Related pages:

- Why Children and Teens Should Get Vaccinated Against COVID-19
- People with Certain Medical Conditions
- COVID-19 Pediatric Data
- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)-Associated Hospitalization Surveillance Network (COVID-NET)

Should children and teens who have previously been infected with COVID-19 get vaccinated?

Emerging evidence indicates that people can get added protection by getting vaccinated after having been infected with COVID-19. So, even if a child has had COVID-19, they should still get vaccinated.

Related page:

- Science Brief: SARS-CoV-2 Infection-induced and Vaccine-induced Immunity

Safety of COVID-19 Vaccination for Children

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe for children and teens?

Yes.

Before recommending COVID-19 vaccination for children, scientists conducted clinical trials with thousands of children to make sure vaccination was safe and effective.

Tens of millions of children and teens ages 5 through 17 years have received a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and ongoing safety monitoring shows that COVID-19 vaccination continues to be safe for children and teens.

Reported side effects tend to be mild, temporary and like those experienced after routine vaccination. Serious reactions after COVID-19 vaccination in children are rare. When they are reported, serious reactions most frequently occur the day after vaccination.

Related pages:

- COVID-19 Vaccine Safety in Children and Teens
- Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines
- Developing COVID-19 Vaccines
- COVID-19 Vaccine Side Effects in Children and Teens

What are the ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccines?

The ingredients in COVID-19 vaccines currently available for adults, adolescents, and children vary by manufacturer.

- Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety
- Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety
- Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety

- Ingredients Included in COVID-19 Vaccines

None of the vaccines contain eggs, gelatin, latex, or preservatives. All COVID-19 vaccines are **free from metals** such as iron, nickel, cobalt, lithium, and rare earth alloys. They are also free from manufactured products such as microelectronics, electrodes, carbon nanotubes, or nanowire semiconductors.

None of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized or approved in the United States contain any live virus.

Can children and teens get COVID-19 from a COVID-19 vaccine?

No. mRNA vaccines, like the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19 and do not interact with DNA in any way. mRNA vaccines teach the body how to fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Then, the body gets rid of the mRNA within a few days after vaccination.

Related page:

- Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines
- (34) How mRNA COVID-19 vaccines were developed – YouTube
- COVID-19 and kids: How mRNA vaccines work – YouTube

Is there a fertility or developmental concern with vaccinating children and teens before they reach puberty?

No. There is no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, can cause female or male fertility problems. There is no evidence that vaccine ingredients, including mRNA, or antibodies made following COVID-19 vaccination would cause any problems with becoming pregnant now or in the future. Similarly, there is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccine affects puberty.

Related page:

- COVID-19 Vaccines for People Who Would Like to Have a Baby

Are there concerns about myocarditis or pericarditis after vaccination in children?

Rare cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart) have been reported after children and teens got a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. New studies have shown the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis associated with mRNA COVID-19 vaccination—mostly among males between the ages of 12 and 39 years—may be further reduced with a longer time between the first and second dose.

Related pages:

- COVID-19 Vaccine Safety in Children and Teens
- Myocarditis and Pericarditis After mRNA COVID-19 Vaccination
- Association Between COVID-19 and Myocarditis Using Hospital-Based Administrative Data — United States, March 2020–January 2021 | MMWR

How is vaccine safety monitored in children and teens?

COVID-19 vaccines have undergone – and continue to undergo – the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. CDC continues to monitor all COVID-19 vaccines after they are authorized or approved for use with new and established safety monitoring systems. Parents and caregivers can register and enroll their child in **v-safe**, which provides personalized and confidential health check-ins after COVID-19 vaccination. Additionally, patients, caregivers, and vaccine providers can report serious health events occurring after vaccination to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). CDC and FDA review VAERS data to identify potential safety concerns.

CDC and FDA continue to monitor vaccines, keep people informed of findings, and use data to make COVID-19 vaccination recommendations.

Related page:

- Ensuring COVID-19 Vaccine Safety in the US

Is it safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines, like flu?

Children and teens can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines, including a flu vaccine, at the same visit. If multiple vaccines are administered at a single visit, each injection will be given in a different injection site, according to recommendations by age.

Getting Children Vaccinated

Should children get a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Everyone ages 12 years and older should get a COVID-19 booster shot. Currently a booster shot is not recommended for children younger than 12 years of age. Learn more about booster shots.

Related page:

- COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations for Children and Teens

How does COVID-19 vaccine dosage work for children and teens?

COVID-19 vaccine dosage is based on age on the day of vaccination, not on size or weight. Children receive a smaller, age-appropriate dose.

Related pages:

- COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations for Children and Teens
- Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety

Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccine for my child or teen?

Parents and caregivers can use vaccines.gov to find doctor's offices, local pharmacies, healthcare clinics, and local health departments where the COVID-19 vaccine for children who are eligible 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-

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.

Related page:

Getting Children and Teens Vaccinated Against COVID-19

Does a parent or guardian have to give consent before a child or teen can receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

There is no federal legal requirement for a parent, guardian, or caregiver to consent for COVID-19 or any other vaccination. However, this does not mean that consent is not required for select age groups. State or local laws and policies, as well as vaccine provider policies, around minor consent for vaccination have existed for a long time and will also apply to COVID-19 vaccination of children.

For information on caregiver consent for COVID-19 vaccination for youth experiencing homelessness, visit COVID-19 Vaccination for People Experiencing Homelessness: Frequently Asked Questions.

Are COVID-19 vaccines for children and teens free?

Yes, COVID-19 vaccines are available for everyone 5 years and older at no cost. COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be given to all eligible people living in the United States, regardless of insurance or immigration status. While a vaccination site may ask to see your health insurance card, it is not required for your child to receive a vaccine.

Related page:

- Getting Children and Teens Vaccinated Against COVID-19

Will children receive a vaccine card?

Yes, all vaccine recipients, including children ages 5 through 11 years, will receive a CDC COVID-19 vaccination card upon initial vaccination. Parents should take a photo of the card and then keep it in a safe place.

Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for Children

Is the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years the same one that's given to adolescents and adults?

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years has the same active ingredients as the vaccine given to people ages 12 years and older but contains a lower dose (10 micrograms) than the vaccine used for older children and adults (30 micrograms). The lower dose was rigorously tested by the manufacturer and found to create the needed immune response for this age group. Your child should get the vaccine made for their age group.

Related page:

- Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety
- COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations for Children and Teens

What is a buffer and how is it used in the COVID-19 vaccine for children?

Buffers help maintain a vaccine's pH and allow the vaccine to remain stable at refrigerated temperatures. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years uses a different buffer than the vaccine for people 12 years and older. A different buffer allows the vaccine to remain at refrigerated temperatures longer than the vaccine for older children, adolescents, and adults. The COVID-19 vaccine for children contains tromethamine (Tris) –a commonly used buffer in other medications and vaccines (including the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has determined that tromethamine does not present any safety or effectiveness concerns for children or adults.

Related page:

- Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety

For Healthcare and Public Health

- Clinical Considerations for Vaccination of Children and Adolescents
- COVID-19 Clinical and Professional Resources

More Information

6 Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccines for Children

How mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines were Developed [00:03:16]

COVID-19 and Kids: How mRNA Vaccines Work [00:02:53]

Last Updated May 20, 2022