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

Updated June 19, 2022

Below are answers to commonly asked questions about COVID-19 vaccination in children and teens.

Have more questions? Visit FAQs about Vaccination.

Benefits of Vaccinating Your Child

Why should children 6 months and older get vaccinated against COVID-19? ⌄

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 give parents greater confidence in their children participating in childcare, school, and other activities.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer, more reliable way to build protection than getting sick with COVID-19. The known risks of COVID-19 and possible severe complications—such as long-term health problems, hospitalization, and even death—outweigh the potential risks of having a rare, adverse reaction to vaccination. The benefit of COVID-19 vaccines, like other vaccines, is that those who get vaccinated get protection without risking the potentially serious consequences of getting sick with COVID-19.

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. For children who have been infected with COVID-19, their next dose can be delayed 3 months from when symptoms started or, if they did not have symptoms, when they received a positive test result.

Related page:

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

Should parents and caregivers wait for updated or additional vaccines, if a child is low risk for infection? ⌃

Parents and caregivers should get their child vaccinated as soon as vaccines are available to them. Getting vaccinated provides the best protection against serious illness if a child gets infected with COVID-19. Since there is no way to tell in advance how children will be affected by COVID-19—and even healthy children can get really sick—it's important to get them vaccinated as soon as possible to protect them against severe COVID-19. To see if vaccines are available for a child, talk to a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, call the local health department or clinic, or visit vaccines.gov.

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 establish the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines.

Millions of children and teens ages 5 through 17 years have received a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Ongoing safety monitoring shows that the known risks and possible severe complications of COVID-19 outweigh the potential risks of having a rare, adverse reaction to vaccination.

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 within a few days after vaccination.

Related pages:

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

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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 and Moderna 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
- 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 5 years and older 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 routinely recommended vaccines, including a flu vaccine, at the same visit.

Getting Children Vaccinated

Should children get a COVID-19 booster? ⌃

Everyone ages 5 years and older should get a COVID-19 booster, if eligible.

Children ages 12 years and older who have a weakened immune system should also get a 2nd booster, when eligible.

Use CDC's COVID-19 booster tool to learn if and when your child or teen can get boosters to stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

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.

appropriate dose.

Related pages:

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

Which vaccine should parents and caregivers of children ages 6 months through 4 years get for their child? Pfizer or Moderna? ⌃

Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for children are safe and effective. Parents and caregivers should get their child vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine that is available to them.

Related pages:

- COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations for Children and Teens
- Getting Children and Teens Vaccinated Against COVID-19

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 1-800-232-0233 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 6 months 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

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Will children receive a vaccine card? ⌃

Yes, all vaccine recipients 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.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines for children the same ones that are given to adults? ⌃

The COVID-19 vaccines for children have the same active ingredients as the vaccines given to adults. However, children receive a smaller, age-appropriate dose that is the right size for them. The smaller doses were rigorously tested and found to create the needed immune response for each age group. Your child should get the vaccine made for their age group.

Related page:

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

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 June 19, 2022