COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens

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Most Children and All Teens Can Get COVID-19 Vaccines

COVID-19 Vaccines Are Safe for Children and Teens

Scientists have conducted clinical trials with about 3,000 children and the FDA has determined that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine has met the safety and efficacy standards for authorization in children ages 5 through 15 years. In addition, Pfizer-BioNTech (COMIRNATY) COVID-19 Vaccine has now been FDA-approved for people ages 16 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

• Adolescents ages 12 years and older receive the same dosage of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine as adults.
• Children ages 5 through 11 years receive one-third of the adult dose of 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 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:

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling

Throughout 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 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.