

VACCINATIONS FOR ALL

COVID-19 Vaccines for Children

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents and Caregivers

Why should my child get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to protect your child from COVID-19. COVID-19 has become one of the top 10 causes of death among children in the United States. While COVID-19 is more dangerous in adults, COVID-19 in children can lead to serious illness, hospitalization, long-term complications like muscle pain or difficulty breathing, and even death.

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and highly effective in preventing illness from COVID-19 in children ages 5-11. Children who are vaccinated also are less likely to spread COVID-19 to others. You can help protect your whole family and community by getting your child vaccinated against COVID-19.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for young children?

Yes! The COVID-19 vaccine was tested in thousands of children ages 5-11 and was shown to be both very safe and effective. No serious side effects were seen in these children. The entire process was monitored very closely by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and independent experts continue to closely monitor children who have received the COVID-19 vaccine for any signs of safety issues.

How many doses of the COVID-19 vaccine does my child need to be considered fully vaccinated?

The COVID-19 vaccine was tested in children ages 5-11 with two doses given three weeks apart. Your child is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they receive the 2nd dose.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine for children 5-11 the same as the vaccine for older children and adults?

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11 is similar to the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for older children and adults, but the dose for children ages 5-11 is one-third the dose (10 mcg) of the vaccine for adolescents and adults (30 mcg). The clinical trial of the vaccine among children ages 5-11 tested both the dose used for adolescents and the lower dose. Researchers found that the lower dose was just as effective in preventing illness from COVID-19 as the higher dose but led to fewer side effects.

Will my child have side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?

Side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine in children ages 5 to 11 are typically mild and not as common or uncomfortable as side effects among adolescents and adults. Children might feel a bit of pain when getting vaccinated, just like with any other vaccine. Afterward, they may have soreness in their arm and they may feel

tired or achy, have a headache, or get a fever. These are all signs that their body is building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. Side effects usually go away after one to two days.

Will my child be at risk for any health conditions after getting the COVID-19 vaccine, such as heart problems?

The COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be safe and there is no evidence to indicate they cause any long-term health issues. There is an extremely low risk of inflammation of the heart (myocarditis) and surrounding tissue (pericarditis) among children ages 5-11 after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. No cases were seen in the clinical trial among children ages 5-11 because these events are very rare. Of the few cases seen among adolescents ages 12-17, most were mild and improved with treatment with an over-the-counter pain reliever and rest. In fact, the risk of long-term heart problems is much greater if your child gets sick with the virus that causes COVID-19.

We do know that if your child gets COVID-19, there is a risk of hospitalization, long-term health issues, and even death, and this risk is greater than the very low risk of serious side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect my child's fertility?

There is no scientific evidence or plausibility that the COVID-19 vaccine can lead to fertility problems. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other health experts recommend that people who may want to have a child in the future get vaccinated.

My child already had COVID-19 and is better now. Should I still get my child vaccinated?

The COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for all children who are eligible to receive it regardless of whether or not they have had COVID-19. Research has shown that people who have been fully vaccinated have better protection against the virus that causes COVID-19 than people who recovered from COVID-19. We also do not yet know how long protection against COVID-19 lasts after recovering from COVID-19. Getting your child vaccinated is the best way to protect them from getting COVID-19 again.

My child is turning 12 soon. Should I wait to get them vaccinated with the higher dose?

We recommend getting your child vaccinated as soon as possible. The clinical trial in children ages 5 to 11 found that the lower dose of the COVID-19 vaccine produced the same immune response but fewer side effects than the higher dose used in adolescents.

When my child turns 12, will the second dose be higher than the first dose they got when they were 11 years old?

The vaccine dosage will be based on your child's age at the time they get the vaccine.

Can my child get the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines, including the flu shot?

Yes. The Centers for Disease Control recommends that the COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines—including the flu shot – can be given at the same time. There is no need to wait between getting any vaccines.

Can my child still get COVID-19 after being fully vaccinated?

If your child gets exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 after being fully vaccinated, there is a small chance they can get infected. The good news is that the vaccine is extremely effective in preventing illness, hospitalization, long-term complications, and death. It is also less likely that your child will transmit the virus to others if they are vaccinated.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine required for my child to attend school?

We highly recommend your child receive the COVID-19 vaccine to keep themselves and their classmates healthy. Right now, the vaccine is not required for attendance at public schools. Private schools, day cares, and camps may require children to be vaccinated against COVID-19 for them to attend, so it's best to check with your provider. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine will make it safer for your child to be in the classroom, participate in afterschool activities and sports, and get together with friends.

My child is immunocompromised. Will the COVID-19 vaccine protect them?

The Centers for Disease Control recommends that immunocompromised people be vaccinated for COVID-19 because they are more likely to get severely ill if they get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Immunocompromised people do have protection from COVID-19, but they are not as well protected as people who are not immunocompromised. When more people in a community are vaccinated, immunocompromised people, including children, are better protected from COVID-19, which is why it is important for as many New Yorkers as possible to get vaccinated.

How can I get a COVID-19 vaccine for my child?

There are a few ways to get a COVID-19 vaccine for your child.

You can schedule an appointment by:

- + Calling your pediatrician
- + Calling 1-877-VAX-4NYC
- + Using the NYC Vaccine Finder (<http://nyc.gov/vaccinelocations>), which includes pharmacies, neighborhood health centers, city-run vaccination clinics, and mobile vaccine vans and buses
- + Requesting an at-home vaccination (<https://forms.cityofnewyork.us/f/home>)

Some vaccination centers offer walk-up vaccinations for children; visit the NYC Vaccine Finder (<http://nyc.gov/vaccinelocations>) to find locations that accept walk-up visits.

Starting November 8, many NYC public schools are offering the COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11. Check <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/covid-information/school-vaccine-sites> for information on locations and dates.

If my child has received the COVID-19 vaccine, do they still have to wear a mask in school?

Students at NYC public schools will continue to be required to wear a mask in school regardless of their vaccination status. Private schools may have different policies; check with your child's school to confirm the policy.