

The COVID-19 vaccine is now recommended for kids 5-11.

The holidays are quickly approaching and so is the excitement for getting together, safely. After careful research and endorsement from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we're happy to announce that children ages 5 to 11 are now eligible and encouraged to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Research shows the vaccine safely gives our 5- to 11-year-olds the same level of protection as people ages 12 and older who are vaccinated.

As we prepare to gather with loved ones for the holidays, the facts and resources provided here can help guide your understanding of the new recommendation for little ones and answer many of the most common questions you may have about protecting your child's health.

If you have additional questions or would like to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment for your child, visit ARchildrens.org/LetsTalk



Food and Drug Administration's Emergency Approval of COVID-19 Vaccines for Children Between 5 and 11

What is the difference between the vaccine for children ages 5-11 and the vaccine for ages 12 and up?

The vaccine dosage for **children ages 5-11** is one-third of the dosage given to older children and adults. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine dosage is ten micrograms for ages 5-to-11 and 30 micrograms for individuals 12 and older.

Despite the smaller dose, the immune response in smaller children is as strong as in older children and adults.

Children will have a two-dose vaccine series, just like adults, and the vaccines are most effective 14 days after the second dose.

What do we know about the long-term effects of the vaccine on growing children? Are there concerns about a potential impact on future fertility?

Side effects are common with all childhood vaccines and occur shortly after injection because the body quickly destroys the substances in the vaccine.

So far, we have several months of safety information on thousands of children involved in the clinical trials and many months of safety information from the millions of vaccinated older children and adults. There is no evidence of any long-term side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine.

Importantly, we continue to monitor all vaccines in the United States for side effects through patient reporting, clinical studies and nationwide monitoring.

There is no evidence of any impact on current or future fertility, pregnancy, or breastmilk. In fact, many women who chose to get vaccinated have since gotten pregnant and given birth. In addition, their babies were born with vaccine antibodies, protecting them from COVID-19.

Does the vaccine work differently for children ages 5-11 than for older children and adults?

The vaccine works the same in children ages 5-11 as it does in adults.

The Pfizer vaccine uses mRNA technology — the “m” stands for messenger. Think of the mRNA molecule like a set of instructions. While many vaccines use a weakened or inactivated germ to trigger an immune response in our bodies, mRNA vaccines carry a set of instructions teaching our cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response and produces antibodies to the virus.

mRNA technology has been studied to treat cancer, muscular dystrophy and other diseases for over 15 years.

You can learn more about mRNA vaccines on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#).

Does my child really need to get vaccinated? Aren't they less likely to get sick from COVID-19 than adults?

The COVID-19 vaccine is the safest, most effective way to protect yourself and your children. From the history of vaccines and the history of the COVID-19 vaccine in adults and in children ages 12 and older, we know receiving the vaccine is much safer than your child getting COVID-19.

Early in the pandemic, it appeared children were less affected, but we now know they can get extremely sick from COVID-19. We also know children can easily spread the infection within their families.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, about one in six Americans infected was under age 18. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, with the surge of the Delta variant, [children now account for as many as one in four infections](#).

While even children without underlying conditions have gotten seriously ill with COVID-19 infections, we are especially worried about children with underlying conditions, such as obesity, which is very common in the United States. Lung disease, asthma, heart disease and immunodeficiency are all risk factors for more serious cases.

Can my child get the COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines like the flu shot at the same time?



Ongoing research shows that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective when administered with other vaccines. The CDC revised their recommendations eliminating any waiting period, including giving the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccinations like the flu shot.

“Experience with other vaccines has shown that the way our bodies develop protection, known as an immune response, after getting vaccinated and possible side effects of vaccines are generally the same when given

alone or with other vaccines,” the CDC says.

The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) issued a statement supporting the change, particularly for children and adolescents needing other childhood vaccinations or who fell behind the recommended schedule. The CDC notes that if multiple vaccines are given during a single visit, the injections may be given in different parts of the body.

Is there any reason my child should NOT get vaccinated?

Children should not get the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine if they have a history of a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient (such as polyethylene glycol) in the vaccine. Allergic reactions to vaccine ingredients are extremely rare. The vaccine does not contain eggs, preservatives or latex, and you can find [a complete list of the ingredients here](#).

If you have questions, talk to your pediatrician before getting your child vaccinated.

If your child has severe allergies to anything else (medications, foods, bees), remain at the vaccination site for 30 minutes after the injection, instead of the 15-minute waiting time recommended for the general population.

Vaccinating everyone age 5 and up is the best way to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect children who are not yet old enough to be vaccinated.

We continue to recommend masking and social distancing as additional means to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 for both vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals.