

FAQs COVID-19 vaccines and kids: Answers about the vaccine for children ages 5-11



Illustration: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Question Why is it important for my child to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Answer At this point in the COVID-19 pandemic, with the highly infectious [Delta variant](#), UC Davis Health pediatricians say you're either going to get vaccinated or you're likely going to get COVID-19. Pediatricians suggest that you don't want to take your chances with your kids getting the virus because they can suffer serious consequences.

Question Will my child get the same dosage of the COVID-19 vaccines as an adult?

Answer The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine dose for younger children is 10 mg, which is 1/3 of the dose for older kids and adults. It is the same schedule: two shots that are 21 days apart.

Question How effective has the COVID-19 vaccine proven to be in kids during clinical trials?

Answer According to the FDA, the immune response of kids ages 5 to 11 was similar to the immune response in people ages 16 to 25. "The vaccine was found to be 90.7% effective in preventing COVID-19 in children 5 through 11," [according to the FDA](#). [Pfizer-BioNTech released the data](#) previously and the [FDA has posted their data to the website](#). UC Davis pediatricians conclude that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective and look forward to having it available for younger children.

Question Should I be worried about long-term effects of my child getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

Answer There is no evidence of long-term effects from getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Question Can COVID-19 vaccines affect fertility or menstruation as my child gets older?

Answer There's no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines have any effect on fertility. Furthermore, there is no scientific theory for how COVID-19 vaccines could cause fertility problems. The Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) briefing for both Pfizer and Moderna detail the findings from the clinical trials about effectiveness, safety, and side effects. There are no reports of any impact on fertility. You can read the 50-plus page briefings from VRBPAC to the FDA on both the [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) and [Moderna vaccines](#). The [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) is currently funding research studies](#) to find out if COVID-19 vaccination can affect a woman's menstrual cycle.



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Question **Are there certain children who shouldn't get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

Answer

Children who have experienced a severe allergic reaction such as anaphylaxis after a previous COVID-19 vaccine dose or to a component of the COVID-19 vaccine should not be vaccinated. Also, children who experienced an immediate allergic reaction of any severity to a previous dose or have a diagnosed allergy to a component of the COVID-19 vaccine should not be vaccinated.

Question **Can COVID-19 vaccines have a negative impact on the heart?**

Answer

The CDC says side effects in adolescents, including possible risk of [myocarditis](#) or [pericarditis](#) “are rare, and the known and potential benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks.”

Question **Do I need to wait to have my child get a COVID-19 vaccine if they recently got another vaccine?**

Answer

The CDC advises that your child can get a flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time. You should talk to your child's pediatrician if they are scheduled to get another vaccine around the time of their COVID-19 shot.

Question **How do the vaccines for 5- to 11-year-olds differ from vaccines for older kids (12 years and up) and adults?**

Answer

The vaccine currently being evaluated by the FDA and CDC for 5- to 11-year-olds uses the same technology. The Pfizer vaccine is an mRNA vaccine. The main difference between the vaccine given to individuals older than 12 years and the one currently being evaluated for 5- to 11-year-olds is that a lower dose will be used for the younger children. One-third of the adult dose was shown to be safe and provide a robust immune response for 5- to 11-year-olds.

Question **Why will the vaccines be rolled out differently—through pediatric offices—instead of mass inoculation sites like we saw for adults?**

Answer

The White House is shifting the approach for 5- to 11-year-olds, because there are data showing that parents often prefer to have their children vaccinated in locations that they are familiar with and with clinicians who are trusted messengers. We also have experience from prior vaccination efforts showing that vaccinating children in pediatric offices has been successful. In addition to pediatric offices, vaccines will also be available at hospitals, health centers, and some community sites.



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Question How much are children aged 5-11 currently contributing to the spread of COVID-19 in the US? What effect will vaccinating this group have on life in America?

Answer Recent data during the Delta wave showed that children can get infected with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and that they can transmit it. We also know that during a time when Delta is the dominant variant, we will need a high level of immunity in the community to decrease transmission. Given that children can transmit the virus and that there are 28 million children aged 5-11 in the US, it will be important to also vaccinate them so that we can decrease the level of transmission in the community.

Question What can you tell parents about the safety aspect of the COVID-19 vaccines for children?

Answer The Pfizer vaccine is safe and provides a robust immune response for children 5 to 11 years of age. If parents have questions about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, they should talk to their child's healthcare professional to have their questions answered. In terms of real-world clinical data in children or young adults, a recent study published by the CDC showed that two doses of the Pfizer vaccine are highly effective in preventing COVID-19 hospitalization among persons aged 12-18 years. We are hoping to have real-world data for younger children once the vaccines are authorized for this age group, but we have information showing that [the vaccines provide advantages for young adults](#).

Sources:

[Learn how to get your flu shot from UC Davis Health, Boston University](#)
THE BRINK, <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2021/covid-vaccines-for-kids-ages-5-to-11/>

UC Davis Health, Updated Nov. 1, 2021

<https://ophthalmology.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine/covid-19-vaccine-kids.html>

