

Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccination Ages 5 and older Frequently Asked Questions

Why should my child get vaccinated against COVID-19?

COVID-19 vaccination can help protect your child from getting COVID-19. Although fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, [children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19](#), can get sick from COVID-19, and can spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to others. Getting your child vaccinated helps to protect your child and your family. Vaccination is now [recommended for everyone 5 years and older](#). Currently, the [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine](#) is the only one available to children 5 years and older.

COVID-19 vaccines have been used under the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history, including studies in children 5 years and older. Your child cannot get COVID-19 from any COVID-19 vaccine. Like adults, children may have some [side effects](#) after COVID-19 vaccination. These side effects may affect their ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a couple of days.

Can my 5-11 aged child get a shot today?

Yes, the vaccine is being offered by pediatricians, local pharmacies and health departments across the state. Some will be starting their vaccination appointments for 5-11 year-olds on Monday 11/8. This information will be available at [vaccine.gov](#).

Can my child get their flu and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time?

Yes, your child can receive the COVID-19 vaccine with flu and other recommended childhood vaccinations.

What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine for children?

Some side effects, **which are normal signs that their body is building protection**, include:

- Pain, redness, swelling in the arm where your child got the shot
- Tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever or nausea

Can my child attend school the same day they get the COVID vaccine?

Yes, your child may attend school the same day he/she receives the vaccine.

My child gets their flu shot at school, will this be available for the COVID-19 vaccine?

Some schools will be providing the COVID-19 vaccine. Please check with your child's school for additional information.

My child is about to turn 12. Which vaccine should they get?

Your child should get the vaccine product that is recommended for their age. Here's why:

- **Age & vaccine dose**

Right now, the only COVID-19 vaccine available for children in the U.S. is the Pfizer BioNTech [mRNA vaccine](#). COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for children 5 years and older. The COVID shot for kids 5 years to 11 years of age is a lower dose than the dose recommended for people 12 years and older.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the Pfizer vaccine for 5- to 11-year-olds. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) then recommended the vaccine for this age group.

- **Can't the doctor just use a smaller amount of the vaccine for my younger child?**

You may wonder why it's important to get the lower dose for younger kids. The reason is that the COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 years old was tested at the lower dose. This lower dose is what has been authorized and recommended.

- **Here are the doses of the Pfizer BioNTech mRNA vaccine, by age:**
 - 12 through 17 years: 30-microgram COVID-19 vaccine - two separate doses, given 21 days apart.
 - 5 through 11 years: 10-microgram COVID-19 vaccine - two separate doses, given 21 days apart.
 - Under 5 years old: A COVID-19 vaccine is not yet available.

Your child's doctor only can use the lower dose when they give the vaccine to 5- to 11-year-olds. There are many reasons for this. But the main reason is to make sure your child gets exactly the amount they need. Doctors will give your child the lower dose using the vials that are being specifically designed for younger children.

Why do we use age for the vaccine dose, but weight for measuring a dose of medicine?

Vaccines don't work the same way medicines such as [antibiotics](#) do. Antibiotics help your body get rid of germs when you are sick. And to get rid of germs, your body needs the right amount of medicine so it can make it to all parts of the body and find the problem. We sometimes dose antibiotics by weight so that the medicine can get to all the places of infection at levels needed by different size bodies.

A vaccine, on the other hand, helps your body know how to stop germs before they make you sick. Just a very small dose is all your cells need to learn how to stop germs.

Cells in your [immune system](#) go to the spot where the vaccine is given, rather than the vaccine needing to get all around the body. With information provided by the vaccine, the immune cells then launch a response to get rid of the virus.

Did you know?

The COVID vaccine dose that your child will get, if they are 5 to 11 years old, is very small—just 10 micrograms. The dose is about one-sixth the weight of a single grain of salt. That tiny amount is all it takes to prepare the immune system so it can stop germs from making someone sick.

Will the lower dose protect children enough?

The COVID vaccine [clinical trial](#) had more than 3,000 children. Researchers studied how well the vaccine worked in 5- to 11-year-olds. They also looked at data on how well the vaccine worked in 16- to 55-year-olds. **The results? Children had the same immune response from the smaller dose and fewer minor side effects.**

After a shot, your child might have mild symptoms as the immune system practices what it learned and how to avoid getting sick. The next time your child is in contact with that virus, the immune system will know how to stop your child from getting sick.

When can my younger child get the vaccine?

Right now, children 6 months through 4 years old are being closely studied.

Soon, vaccine safety experts may talk about a COVID vaccine dose for these young children. For now, all the ways we protect children from getting sick from COVID are important. That includes getting the vaccine if you are old enough, especially if you [interact with younger children](#). Mothers can help protect babies when they get the vaccine before or during [pregnancy](#) and by [breastfeeding](#).