

## VACCINATIONS FOR ALL

# COVID-19 Vaccines for Children

## Frequently Asked Questions for Parents and Caregivers

### **Why should my child get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

COVID-19 can be dangerous in children and can make them very sick. Children who get very sick may need hospital care or have long-term health issues, like muscle pain or trouble breathing, and even death. COVID-19 is one of the top 10 causes of death among children in the United States. The best way to protect your child from COVID-19 is to vaccinate them.

The vaccine is safe and highly effective in preventing illness from COVID-19 in children ages 5 to 11. Children who get the vaccine are less likely to get infected and spread COVID-19. Vaccinating your child against COVID-19 also helps protect your family and community.

### **Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for young children?**

Yes! The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine was tested in thousands of children ages 5 to 11 and is very safe and effective. None of these children had serious side effects.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration watched the testing process closely. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other experts are still carefully looking for any safety concerns in children who received the COVID-19 vaccine.

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

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine was tested in children ages 5 to 11 with two doses given three weeks apart. Your child is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the second dose. Children 5 and older who are immunocompromised should get an additional dose at least 28 days after their second Pfizer dose (for a total of 3 doses) as part of their primary series.

### **Is the COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 the same as the vaccine for others?**

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 is 10 micrograms, which is one-third of the dose for adolescents and adults. Researchers found that this lower dose led to fewer side effects in small children and was as effective in preventing COVID-19 as the higher dose.

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

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

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

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

There is no evidence that the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine causes long-term health issues. There may be a very low risk of heart inflammation among children ages 5 to 11 who get the COVID-19 vaccine, but there were no cases of heart inflammation in the clinical trial among children ages 5 to 11. Of the few cases seen in adolescents ages 12 to 17, most were mild and improved with prescription medicine 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.

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

There is no evidence that the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine can cause fertility issues. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other health experts recommend that people who may want to have a child get vaccinated.

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

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for all eligible children regardless of whether they had COVID-19. Research shows that fully vaccinated people are better protected against COVID-19 than those who recovered from it. We also do not know how long protection against COVID-19 lasts after recovering from it. Vaccinating your child 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.

**If my child is 11 when they get the first dose and turns 12 before getting the second, will they get a higher dose then?**

Yes. The vaccine dose will be based on your child's age at the time they get the vaccine. But there is flexibility with choosing the lower dose.

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

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

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

If your child is exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 after being fully vaccinated, there is a small chance they can get infected. However, the vaccine is highly effective in preventing illness, need for hospital care, long-term complications and death. It is also less likely that your child will spread the virus if they are vaccinated.

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

We highly recommend you vaccinate your child against COVID-19 to keep them and their classmates healthy. Right now, the vaccine is not required to attend public schools. Private schools, day cares and camps may require it, 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.

**Are booster shots recommended for children?**

At this time, everyone aged 5 and older is encouraged to receive a booster shot. People ages 5-17 who previously got the Pfizer primary series more than five months ago are eligible for the Pfizer booster shot only. Certain immunocompromised children ages 5-11 may receive an additional dose of the Pfizer vaccine 28 days after their second shot. Children who are 5 or older and immunocompromised should get a booster shot at least 3 months after receiving the additional dose of their primary Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination series (for a total of 4 doses). Speak with your child's primary care physician to learn more.

**My child has a weakened immune system. Will the COVID-19 vaccine protect them?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the Pfizer vaccine for people with a weakened immune system because they are more likely to get very sick if they get COVID-19. Even after getting the vaccine, people with a weakened immune system are less protected than others who

are vaccinated. When more people in a community are vaccinated, people with a weakened immune system—including children—are better protected from COVID-19. This is why it is important for as many New Yorkers as possible to get vaccinated. Certain immunocompromised children ages 5-11 may receive an additional dose of the Pfizer vaccine 28 days after their second shot.

### **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 (1-877-829-4692)
- + Using the NYC Vaccine Finder at [vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov), which includes pharmacies, neighborhood health centers, city-run vaccine clinics, and mobile vaccine vans and buses
- + Requesting an at-home vaccination at [forms.cityofnewyork.us/f/home](https://forms.cityofnewyork.us/f/home)

Appointments for pediatric vaccinations are encouraged. Limited walk-ins are accepted. Please schedule an appointment for your child's vaccine at [covid19.nychealthandhospitals.org/COVIDVaxEligibility](https://covid19.nychealthandhospitals.org/COVIDVaxEligibility) and contact one of our hospitals if you have questions about pediatric vaccine availability.

Get more information about where to get vaccinated at [vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov) or call 877-829-4692.

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

Students at NYC public schools will still need to wear a mask in school, regardless of whether they got the vaccine. Private schools may have different policies; check with your child's school.