

Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Vaccines for Infants, Children and Teenagers

COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for infants, children, and teenagers ages 6 months and older to prevent serious illness, including the risk of hospitalization and death.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued emergency use authorizations for COVID-19 vaccine products by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna created specifically with lower doses for children. There are different doses for different age groups. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all children ages 6 months and older, including children who have already had COVID-19, get vaccinated and get a booster dose when eligible.

Help Protect Your Child

COVID-19 vaccination can help protect everyone 6 months and older from getting seriously ill from COVID-19. Parents are encouraged to talk to their child's doctor or a qualified healthcare provider to get the facts about COVID-19 and the available vaccines. Key benefits of vaccination, according to the CDC:

- COVID-19 can make children and teens of any age very sick, cause short-term and long-term health problems, and sometimes require treatment in a hospital. Some children and teens have even died from COVID-19.
 - COVID-19 was one of the top five leading causes of death among children during the pandemic – and the only infectious disease that was a leading cause of death, according to the CDC.
 - There is no way to tell in advance how children or teens will be affected by COVID-19.
 - Children with certain medical conditions such as asthma, sickle cell disease, or diabetes or who have weakened immune systems are at a higher risk for serious illness.
 - Children who are otherwise healthy can get very sick from COVID-19 and need hospital care. Approximately 1 in 3 children younger than 18 years old hospitalized with COVID-19 have no underlying conditions.
- COVID-19 vaccines offer the best protection against serious illness, including hospitalization and death, from COVID-19. The benefit of vaccines is protection without risking the potentially serious consequences of getting sick with COVID-19.
- Children who have had COVID-19 should still get vaccinated after recovering from the infection. Prior infection does not prevent reinfection.
 - For children who have been infected with COVID-19, the next dose can be delayed 3 months from when symptoms started or, if they did not have symptoms, when they received a positive test result.
- Vaccination can significantly reduce the likelihood of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), a complication from COVID-19 infection where different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs.

Available COVID-19 Vaccines for Children

Pfizer and Moderna offer COVID-19 vaccines specifically made for children, and infants/toddlers/preschoolers. These vaccines are given at lower doses for younger age groups.

- **Moderna:** The vaccine had previously been authorized for use in adults 18 years of age and older and has received full FDA approval for adults. Now children as young as 6 months can receive the Moderna vaccine.
 - **Ages 6 months through 5 years:** A lower-dose vaccine (25 mcg/0.25 mL) is available as a two-dose primary series given 4-8 weeks apart, with a third primary series dose for [immunocompromised](#) children given at least 4 weeks after the second dose.
 - **Ages 6 years through 11 years:** A lower-dose vaccine (50 mcg/0.5 mL) is available as a two-dose primary series given 4-8 weeks apart, with a third primary series dose for [immunocompromised](#) children given at least 4 weeks after the second dose.
 - **Age 12 years and older:** The same dose given to adults (100 mcg/0.5 mL) can now be given to adolescents ages 12 years through 17 years. This vaccine is available as a two-dose primary series given 4-8 weeks apart, with a third primary series dose for immunocompromised children given at least 4 weeks after the second dose.

- **Pfizer:** The vaccine had previously been authorized for use in children and adults ages 5 years and older and has received full FDA approval for ages 16 and older.
 - **Ages 6 months through 4 years:** A lower-dose vaccine (3 mcg/0.2 mL) is available for children age 6 months through 4 years as a three-dose primary series with 3-8 weeks (3 weeks if [immunocompromised](#)) between the first and second dose and at least 8 weeks between the second and third dose. It is one-tenth of the dose given to adolescents and adults.
 - **Ages 5 through 11 years:** A lower-dose vaccine (10 mcg/0.2 mL) is available for children ages 5-11 years as a two-dose primary series with 3-8 weeks (3 weeks if [immunocompromised](#)) between the first and second dose. [Immunocompromised individuals](#) in this age group may have an additional dose 4 weeks following completion of the two-dose series. A booster dose can be given 5 months after the primary series (or 3 months if immunocompromised). It is one-third of the dose given to adolescents and adults.
 - **Ages 12 and older:** Adolescents in this age group receive the same dose as adults (30 mcg/0.3 mL). The vaccine is given as a two-dose primary series with 3-8 weeks (3 weeks if [immunocompromised](#)) between the first and second dose. [Immunocompromised individuals](#) in this age group may have an additional dose 4 weeks following completion of the two-dose series. A booster dose can be given 5 months after the primary series (or 3 months if immunocompromised). A second booster can be given to immunocompromised individuals or those with medical conditions that increase their risk for severe COVID-19 illness at least 4 months after the first booster.

Prepare for Vaccination

The experience of getting a COVID-19 vaccine will be very similar to the experience of getting routine vaccines. Parents can help prepare their children for vaccination.

- Tell the vaccine provider about any allergies your child may have.
- Talk to your child before vaccination about [what to expect](#).
- Help make your child feel calm before vaccination. Consider bringing a favorite toy or blanket to help.
- Encourage your child to wear loose clothing with quick access to the arm or leg, and drink plenty of water before the appointment.
- Distract your child as the injection is being given.
- Ask your child to sit or lie down during vaccination and for 15 minutes after the vaccine is given, to prevent fainting and injuries related to fainting. Fainting is more common among children and often related to dehydration or anxiety.
- Stay for 15–30 minutes after your child's COVID-19 vaccination so your child can be observed.
- Ask your child's healthcare provider for advice on using non-aspirin pain reliever and other steps you can take at home to comfort your child. It is **not recommended** you give pain relievers before vaccination to try to prevent side effects.

Some people experience mild side effects from the vaccine, which are normal signs that their body is building protection. These side effects are common and should go away in a few days. Some people have no side effects, and allergic reactions and severe reactions are rare. The most common side effects after vaccination include redness, swelling, and pain/tenderness at the injection site. Other side effects include tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, nausea/vomiting, decreased appetite, and irritability.

About Emergency Use Authorization

An Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) allows the use of a medical product that has not yet received full FDA approval and licensure during a public health emergency if the benefits of its use outweigh any known or potential risks. COVID-19 vaccines have been granted EUA following rigorous review. To date, the Pfizer vaccine has received full FDA approval/licensure for use in people 16 years and older (packaged as Comirnaty), and the Moderna vaccine has received full FDA approval for use in people 18 years and older (packaged as Spikevax).

In the past, EUAs have been issued for products, devices, and drugs related to Ebola, H1N1, Zika, and others. The EUAs are valid until the pandemic is over, the FDA revokes the EUAs, or the products are approved for traditional licensure by the FDA. The FDA closely monitors each vaccine for safety after the EUA is issued. Drug manufacturers are encouraged to obtain traditional FDA licensed vaccine approval as soon as possible.

Parent/Guardian Consent

Consent from a parent or guardian is required before youth under age 18 years can be vaccinated. Emancipated teens may sign their own consent.

When and Where to Be Vaccinated

There will be many opportunities to be vaccinated in your community, whether you walk in or make an appointment with a nearby provider. The vaccine will be available at select pharmacies, local health departments, children's hospitals, hospitals, health networks, community

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov

health centers, and select pediatric and primary care offices across the state. Contact your healthcare provider to determine availability and to schedule an appointment, or visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov to find a provider and make an appointment.

If you are considering vaccination at a pharmacy, check with the pharmacy regarding how young they vaccinate. Pharmacists and pharmacy interns may vaccinate children as young as 3 years of age, subject to certain requirements.

Updated June 24, 2022

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov. For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.