

COVID-19 Vaccines: FAQs

Who should get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Since COVID vaccines were recommended for everyone 5 years and older, millions of children and teens have been safely vaccinated.

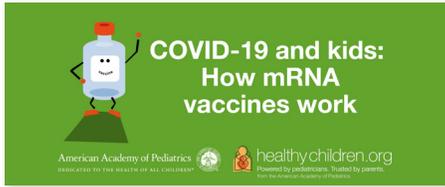
To optimize protection, everyone 5 and older should get a booster dose. A third vaccine dose as part of the primary series is recommended for those with weakened immune systems. See eligibility below.

Age of child or teen	Can they get a COVID vaccine?	How many doses?	When?	Booster dose?	When to boost?
0 months through 4 years	Vaccine is not yet available for this age group	_____	_____	_____	_____
5 through 11 years with weakened immune system	✓	Three doses of Pfizer BioNTech mRNA vaccine that is approved for their age	Dose two is given 21 days after dose one. Dose three is given 28 days after dose two.	✓	Booster dose is given three months after dose three.
5 through 11 years	✓	Two doses of Pfizer BioNTech mRNA vaccine that is approved for their age	Dose two is given 21 days after dose one.	✓	Booster dose is given five months after dose two.
12 through 17 years with weakened immune system	✓	Three doses of Pfizer BioNTech mRNA vaccine that is approved for their age	Dose two is given 21 days after dose one.* Dose three is given 28 days after dose two.	✓	Booster dose is given three months after dose three. Certain moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals may receive a second booster dose at least four months after their first booster.***
12 through 17 years	✓	Two doses of Pfizer BioNTech mRNA vaccine that is approved for their age	Dose two is given 3–8 weeks (21–56 days) after dose one.**	✓	Booster dose is given five months after dose two.

*Three weeks between the first and second dose of Pfizer BioNTech mRNA vaccine remains the recommended interval for people who are immunocompromised or who need early protection due to increased concern about community transmission or risk of severe disease.

**An 8-week interval may be optimal for kids 12 years old and up because it gives the body a chance to build a stronger immune response and better protection. This longer interval also can help lower the very rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis that has been reported mostly in adolescent and young adult males after the vaccine. Talk to your pediatrician about the timing that is best for your child.

***Talk to your pediatrician to see if this is right for your child.



Scan here with your smartphone to watch the video.

How do COVID vaccines work?

COVID vaccines work similarly to other vaccines children routinely receive. Germs such as SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID, invade and multiply inside the body. The vaccines help stop this by teaching the immune system to recognize and make antibodies that fight the virus.

Children and teens who are vaccinated and boosted are better protected. If they do get infected, they likely will not be as sick as they would without the vaccine or booster.

How do we know COVID vaccines are safe for kids?

Millions of kids in the U.S. are already vaccinated! Serious side effects are extremely rare. People who are not vaccinated and become infected also may be at higher risk of long-term effects from their infection (known as long COVID or post-COVID conditions).

The vaccines continue to be watched very closely. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that COVID vaccines will have “the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.” To help with safety monitoring, the CDC has a tool called v-safe where you use your smartphone to complete health check-ins and report any side effects experienced after getting the COVID vaccine. Parents and guardians can enroll children ages 5 years and older in v-safe.



Scan here with your smartphone to learn more and get started with v-safe.



Scan here with your smartphone to use the interactive CDC tool to determine when or if your child can get one or more COVID-19 boosters.

Did you know?

Even though widespread use of mRNA vaccines is new, this technology has been studied for decades.

Still have questions?

Ask your pediatrician! They can answer your questions and help you with your decision.

Adapted from the HealthyChildren.org article *The Science Behind COVID-19 Vaccines: Parent FAQs* (1/31/2022). (<https://healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/The-Science-Behind-the-COVID-19-Vaccine-Parent-FAQs.aspx>)

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