

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

Kids and the COVID-19 Vaccine Email for Parents



Audience: Marketing & Communications, Medical Groups, Vaccine Administrators

Revision Date: 11/2/21

Version: # 1

COVID-19 Response Team Owner: Communications

Date of Last Review: 11/2/21

Guidance: Use this template email for outreach to parents of patients ages 5-11.

PEDIATRICS UPDATE

Kids and the COVID-19 Vaccine: What Parents Need to Know

The COVID-19 vaccine is now available to children ages 5 to 11. Here's what parents and kids need to know about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine, the possible side effects, and the benefits of getting vaccinated.

We Recommend COVID Vaccine for Children Age 5-11

On Nov. 2, 2021, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine was authorized for emergency use for children ages 5-11. It is a 2-dose series taken three weeks apart. Each dose will be 1/3 the dosage of the adolescent/adult vaccine.

The vaccine for children ages 5-11 years is effective:

- 90-100% effective in clinical trials
- There were no severe cases of COVID-19 in clinical trials
- The vaccine works against Delta and other known variants of concern

<Office Name> has been vaccinating children ages 12 and up since May of 2021, and we have confidence that the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective for our patients. As of October 2021, more than 11.1 million adolescents have been vaccinated against COVID-19 with the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccine Appointments Available

<Office Name> offering COVID-19 vaccines to new and existing patients at our pediatric offices. Online scheduling is available on our <pediatric office website.>

Appointment availability may be limited at some practices. If you have trouble finding an appointment, we encourage you to search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you.

Don't Forget Flu

It is more important than ever to stay healthy and protect yourself against preventable illnesses. Most offices are offering flu shots along with COVID vaccines. Flu vaccination appointments can also be scheduled online <website link>.

Top Ten Questions Parents Ask about the COVID-19 Vaccine

Should I worry the vaccine is too “new”? No.

As of October 2021, more than 6.63 billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been given worldwide, with more than 416 million doses in the United States. For adolescents alone, over 11 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine tell us that this vaccine is no longer “new.” Scientists and pediatricians feel confident in the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine. Waiting puts you at higher risk for infection and illness.

The vaccine got to us fast due to:

- The vaccine research for mRNA started in 1961 and, in the last decade specifically, was focused on SARS.
- The vaccine was released more quickly than other vaccines because the production started before the clinical trials. This was due to the pandemic, which provided funding and resources to make that happen.
- Due to high disease rates in our community during vaccine development, we didn't have to wait for a minimum number of cases for clinical trials, as is standard with vaccine development.

Will we need booster shots every year? We don't know yet.

It depends on how many people get vaccinated and if the virus continues to spread and change. As the population becomes vaccinated, we reduce the spread of the virus, which helps to prevent it from continuing to change. We won't need boosters if we are reducing and eliminating variants of COVID-19.

Does it affect puberty or fertility? No.

Based on our knowledge of mRNA, we are confident that the COVID-19 vaccine will not have long-term effects on puberty or fertility. mRNA cannot integrate with DNA or alter cells.

- Vaccine ingredients are cleared from the body quickly. mRNA is fragile and breaks down within 72 hours after injection. Ingredients do not linger in the body.
- Thousands upon thousands have gotten pregnant after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.
- mRNA vaccine is not made up of COVID-19. It is only the protein.
- There are reports of menstrual cycle changes after the COVID-19 vaccine. This is due to the body mounting an immune response and a temporary side effect, like a fever.

What are the most common side effects for kids? They can vary but are minimal.

- Side effects that have been reported are mild to moderate such as fever, fatigue, headache, chills, diarrhea, or muscle aches.
- More kids reported side effects with the second dose compared to the first dose.
- Rare side effects can happen, such as swollen lymph nodes or skin sensitivity, but these are not long-term and resolved in most cases in a few days.

How do we know about long term side effects? Decades of research.

Based on our knowledge of mRNA and the human body, we don't expect long-term side effects since it breaks down in the body in 72 hours.

- As will all vaccines, including the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines, concerning side effects have all occurred within 6-8 weeks after injection. Vaccine development is based on decades of research. Scientists have done a rigorous review of all available data before approving for children. Our history of science tells us that if there are no side effects in those first few weeks, we are confident that concerns that arise with any patient decades later are unlikely to be related to any vaccine.
- mRNA cannot be converted to or inserted into DNA. It's not scientifically possible.

How common is Myocarditis for children after vaccination? Extremely rare.

Myocarditis means "inflammation of the heart muscle. This can happen due to the robust immune response the vaccine can have on your body.

- It is very rare. We expect 26 cases of myocarditis per 1 million doses given. That's 0.0026%.
- Symptom of myocarditis is most commonly chest pain or difficulty breathing and usually happens within the first week after injection.
- Adolescents who have had this rare side effect are monitored closely. Most make a full recovery in 3-4 weeks by using anti-inflammatory medications like ibuprofen.
- No kids have died of myocarditis after the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Myocarditis can also happen if you get the actual COVID-19 virus. In those cases, unfortunately, the myocarditis is more common, more severe, and last long-term.

My child had COVID. Do they need the vaccine? Yes.

- We know that "natural immunity" can be high at first. However, protection can drop off quickly or change based on circulating variants.
- Getting a vaccine, even for those who have already had COVID-19, strengthens your immune response.
- If you had COVID-19 once, it is possible to get a different strain again. The immune response after infection is not as focused. Evidence shows the vaccines protect you longer and for all the variants to date.

- Most importantly, the vaccine gives protection and prevents hospitalization for several of the COVID variants.
- Your child can get the COVID-19 vaccine once they are out of quarantine. There is no "waiting period," as another strain may come, and the vaccine will protect from getting hospitalized.

Can kids become very sick with COVID? Yes.

COVID-19 disease in kids can range from no symptoms to severe illness.

- As of October 2021, over 6.3 million COVID-19 pediatric cases have been reported.
- Only 43% of kids under 12 have natural immunity.
- 30% of hospitalizations for kids with COVID-19 had **no underlying medical conditions**. As of October 2021, there were 5,217 MIS-C cases linked to COVID-19 in kids. This multi-organ system effect makes children extremely ill and requires hospitalization, often in the ICU.
- Long COVID, or lingering COVID-19 symptoms, can lead to learning problems, heart problems, exercise fatigue with sports, and respiratory issues. This has been reported in about 8% of children who have had COVID-19.
- **Since the pandemic began, over 600 pediatric deaths due to COVID-19 have been reported. It is now a top 10 cause of death for kids in the United States.**

What are the ingredients? Put simply, it's fat, salt, electrolytes and sugar.

- Lipids: This "fatty layer" protects the delicate mRNA so it has time to work before getting chopped up. Polyethylene glycol (PEG), the most famous lipid, is also the main ingredient in MiraLAX (which you know about if your child has ever been constipated).
- Potassium chloride, monobasic potassium phosphate, sodium chloride, and dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate and sucrose: These fancy names are just salt, some electrolytes, and sugar. These ingredients help keep the vaccine stable and are natural preservatives.

Is there less quarantine from school, sports, or activities if vaccinated? Yes.

- This pandemic has been traumatizing, especially for children. Their lives were abruptly disrupted in March 2020, and their mental and physical health has suffered. Anxiety and depression rates are up.
- **<Based on the State of Michigan's current guidelines, students who are vaccinated and exposed to COVID-19 can remain in school and wear a mask.>**
- We know that less quarantining will only benefit all children.