

Pediatric (Ages 5-11 Years Old) COVID-19 Vaccine Q&A

1. Is the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine safe and effective for young recipients (5-11 years old)?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), clinical trials have shown that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is highly effective at preventing COVID-19 infection in children ages 5-11. Vaccinations may help keep children from spreading COVID-19 to others and can also help keep your child from getting seriously sick even if they do get COVID-19. From a safety perspective, the vaccine has undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.

2. Why is it important for children ages 5-11 years old to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 can often be milder in children when compared with adults, but the disease can still make children severely sick, require hospitalization and, in some cases, result in death. While children are at lower risk for severe illness from COVID-19, they can still become infected and spread the virus to others, including adults. Additionally, children with underlying health conditions are more at risk for severe illness and some children could develop serious short and long-term complications as a result of being infected.

Getting an age-appropriate dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine can protect children ages 5-11 and others they are around, including family members who may be at higher risk or not able to be vaccinated. Additionally, getting vaccinated helps keep children in school and able to participate in extracurricular activities, like sports, playdates and other events.

3. How many doses are required for the pediatric population (5-11 years old) and over what timeframe?

The vaccine series for children 5-11 years old is two doses given 3 weeks (21 days) apart. It is recommended that you make your child's appointment for the second dose at the time of the first dose appointment.

4. What are the most common side effects from the vaccine in children ages 5-11 years old?

Commonly reported side effects in clinical trials included injection site pain (sore arm), redness and swelling, fatigue, headache, muscle and/or joint pain, chills, fever, swollen lymph nodes, nausea and decreased appetite. More children reported side effects after the second dose than after the first dose. Side effects were generally mild to moderate in severity and occurred within two days after vaccination, and most went away within one to two days.

Pain relievers are not recommended before vaccination to try to prevent side effects.

5. Is the dosage for children ages 5-11 years old the same as what is administered to adults and teens?

No. Each dose is 10 micrograms, which is one-third of the dose used in adults and teens. This recommended dosage has been found to be highly effective in protecting young recipients against COVID-19. This vaccine is NOT interchangeable with the vaccine for individuals 12 years old and older.

6. What safety measures are in place to ensure my child receives the appropriate dosage?

To avoid confusion, the formulation for children ages 5-11 years old is packaged with an orange label and orange cap, while the vaccine for adults is packaged with a purple label and purple cap. Our team members who administer vaccines have completed the necessary vaccine safety training and diligently follow the appropriate clinical protocols.

7. What if my 11-year-old is turning 12 soon? Should I wait to get him/her vaccinated since the vaccine dosage will change?

Per guidance from the CDC, pediatricians will allow for a 4-day grace period around birthdays to determine which dose of the COVID-19 vaccine is needed. For children who are 11 when they start the series, they should receive another 10-microgram dose after they turn 12 a few weeks later.

8. Can my child receive other vaccines at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. It is safe for your child to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines, including the flu vaccine, at the same time.

9. Are any other COVID-19 vaccines authorized for children ages 5-11 years old?

Currently, Pfizer is the only vaccine manufacturer that has received emergency use authorization for this age group.

10. Where can I sign my child up to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

You may contact our Mountain Pediatric Group offices to schedule an appointment. You can also find a COVID-19 vaccine by visiting www.vaccines.gov, texting your ZIP code to 438829, or calling 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you.

11. I've read that fertility could be impacted. Is that true?

A: There has been no demonstrated link between vaccines and infertility in the studies conducted to date. The CDC reports there is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists states that

the vaccine studies do not indicate any safety concerns for those who are pregnant or want to become pregnant.