

# COVID-19 Vaccines: Children 5-11 Years Old

## Information to Share with Patients

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- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children between the ages of 5 and 11 receive a Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric COVID-19 vaccine.
- Pfizer-BioNTech is currently the only COVID-19 vaccine authorized for children 5-11 years old (see chart below).

Authorized for:	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	J&J/Janssen
4 years and under	No	No	No
5-11 years old	<b>Yes</b>	No	No
12-17 years old	<b>Yes</b>	No	No
18+ years	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>

- Children between the ages of 2 and 4, and all other unvaccinated children and adults, should continue to wear a mask in public spaces and around people they don't live with.
- To be considered fully vaccinated, children aged 5-11 will receive two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric COVID-19 vaccine, 21 days apart.

### Why should children 5-11 years old receive the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric COVID-19 vaccine?

- Although children are at a lower risk of becoming severely ill with COVID-19 compared with adults, children can:
  - Be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19
  - Get very sick from COVID-19
  - Have both short and long-term health complications from COVID-19
  - Spread COVID-19 to others

In addition:

- Children with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk of developing severe illness due to COVID-19 compared with those without underlying medical conditions
  - Children who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 can also develop serious complications like multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) — a condition in which different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs
- Vaccinating children can help protect family members who may be at increased risk of getting very sick if they are infected.

- Vaccination can help children from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19.
- Vaccinating children ages 5 years and older can help keep them in school and help them safely participate in sports and other activities.

### **Where can children 5-11 years old get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

- Our community clinics are only vaccinating patients ages 12 and older at this time. Please be sure to check the specific age ranges listed for each site. For vaccination information for children ages 5-11, please contact your child's pediatrician's office, your local board of health or see additional resources below.
- Visit <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/> to view hundreds of vaccination sites, and search for locations offering available appointments.
- Call the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Line (2-1-1) and follow the prompts. The Resource Line is available in English and Spanish and has translators available in approximately 100 additional languages.
- Patients can also visit <https://www.vaccines.gov/>, text their ZIP code to 438829 or call (800) 232-0233 to find a vaccination site, including outside of Massachusetts.

### **Is the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine safe for children 5-11 years old?**

Before recommending COVID-19 vaccination for children, scientists conducted clinical trials. The FDA gave the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 emergency authorization to use in children ages 5-15 years old and full approval to use in people ages 16 years and older. We are confident in the quality, safety, and reliability of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Emergency Use Authorizations.

Beth Israel Lahey Health's team has closely examined the FDA's process for COVID-19 vaccine trials and are satisfied that they make decisions that are guided by strong scientific data. Like most vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine has some reactions, but the chance of having a bad reaction is far lower than the chance of getting COVID-19.

### **How is the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine different for children 5-11 years old?**

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children ages 5-11 years has the same active ingredients as the vaccine given to adults and adolescents. However, children ages 5-11 years cannot get the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine given to adults and adolescents.

Children ages 5-11 years receive an age-appropriate dose that is one-third of the adult dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Smaller needles, designed specifically for children, are also used for children ages 5-11 years.

Unlike many medications, COVID-19 vaccine dosage does not vary by patient weight but by age on the day of vaccination.

### **Will children 5-11 years old experience side effects?**

Serious health events after COVID-19 vaccination are rare. Some side effects may occur; these are normal signs that the body is building protection.

**On the arm where the shot was administered:**      **Throughout the body:**

- pain
  - redness
  - swelling
- tiredness
  - headache
  - muscle pain
  - chills
  - fever
  - nausea

These side effects may affect the child's ability to do daily activities, but they should subside in a few days.

### **How can I prepare my child for the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Unlike other routine vaccinations, it is not recommended that you give pain relievers before vaccination to try to prevent side effects.

Talk to your child before vaccination about [what to expect](#) from the COVID-19 vaccination. Get additional tips on how to prepare [here](#).

### **Can my child receive routine vaccinations at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Children 5-11 years old can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines, including flu vaccine, at the same time.

Visit the [CDC website](#) for more information about the pediatric Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.