



The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective for children 5 to 11

Choosing to vaccinate your child is an important decision, and it's OK if you have questions. Here's fact-based information from our medical experts to help guide you. If you want more information, we encourage you to talk with your child's doctor.

Vaccine safety and effectiveness

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for children?

Yes. The vaccine's safety was studied in approximately 3,100 children 5 to 11, and no serious side effects have been detected. The children's immune responses to the vaccine were like those of individuals 16 to 25.

How effective is the vaccine in children?

Pfizer's data shows that the vaccine is 90.7% effective in preventing COVID-19 in children 5 to 11. Study data also shows that the vaccine reduces the risk of children developing symptoms if they do become infected.

Why vaccinate young children when the risk to them is low? Is the benefit worth the risk?

Providing safe and effective vaccinations to children, especially as they've returned to school, is an important step to help protect them from getting sick from COVID-19. We're learning more and more that children can and do spread COVID-19. Although the risks to any individual child of having severe illness or complications from COVID-19 are low, with COVID-19 circulating in our communities, we still see children hospitalized with infections

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or complications like multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C). Although rare, children can also die from COVID-19 at rates comparable to seasonal flu.

More than 5,500 children with COVID-19 have developed MIS-C.¹ MIS-C is a condition where different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. Most children with MIS-C have gotten better with medical care, but 48 have died.

How is the Pfizer vaccine for this age group different?

Children 5 to 11 will get a lower dose of 10 micrograms – one-third of what’s used for people 12 and older – and with smaller needles. This lower dose was selected to prioritize safety, tolerability, and immune response in this age group. Like the Pfizer vaccine for adults and teens, the vaccine will be given in 2 doses, 3 weeks apart. The caps on the vials will be color-coded to help differentiate them (orange caps for kids, and purple caps for adults and teens).

Vaccine side effects

What are the potential side effects?

Commonly reported side effects in the clinical trial were the same as those in people of other ages, including 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. Side effects were generally mild to moderate and occurred within 2 days after vaccination, and most went away within 1 to 2 days.

There were no cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) in the clinical trial. The Food and Drug Administration determined that the risk of a child in this age group developing myocarditis is low, and that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the potential risks. Myocarditis is a rare condition that usually resolves with over-the-counter medication and rest. It’s been detected in 877 U.S. residents between ages 12 and 29 who have gotten a COVID-19 vaccine. None of those cases have been fatal.²

Getting a vaccine

Is there a cost for the vaccine?

No. You shouldn’t be charged anything for a COVID-19 vaccination no matter where you or your child get it.

How should I prepare my child for their appointment?

Your child should wear comfortable clothing that makes it easy to expose their upper arm. Expect to have some waiting time, including an observation period of up to 30 minutes after the vaccination. Please don’t arrive more than 5 minutes before your appointment. Masks are required in Kaiser Permanente buildings, but we’ll give you or your child a mask if you don’t have one.

1. “Health Department-Reported Cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) in the United States,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC.gov, accessed November 8, 2021. 2. “Myopericarditis Following COVID-19 Vaccination: Updates from the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS),” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, October 21, 2021.