



**Note 12-20-21: These FAQs are currently be updated.**

**Young people ages 5-17 are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine made by Pfizer.**

**Vaccinations are always free.**

**Neither you nor your child will be asked about immigration status. Visit: [VaccinateLACounty.com](https://www.vaccinate.lacounty.gov) or [VacunateLosAngeles.com](https://www.vacunatelosangeles.com) (Spanish) to find a vaccination.**

### **Why should my child get vaccinated against COVID-19?**

Vaccinating your child(ren) is the best way to protect them from getting COVID-19. Even though COVID-19 is often milder in children than adults, they can also become very sick. Some children may need hospital care and may even die from “Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome in Children.” (MIS-C). This is a condition where different parts of the body can become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. Additionally, some children who get infected have long-term health complications (called long COVID). Children with long COVID may feel tired, get headaches, and have trouble focusing. This can last for weeks to months after getting COVID-19. There is no way to tell in advance if a child will get a severe case of COVID-19 or if they will get long COVID.

Once your child is fully vaccinated, it will be safer for them to take part in regular activities. Hanging out with friends, going to school without disruption, playing sports, and traveling to see family will be safer. They won't be required to test to play certain sports or to go to large events. They also won't need to quarantine if they are exposed to COVID-19 if they do not have symptoms. This includes being exposed at school, home, while playing organized sports, or after travel.

Getting your child vaccinated also helps to protect family and friends. This is especially helpful for protecting people who are not vaccinated (such as children under 5) and those at higher risk of getting really sick if infected, such as [older adults](#) and those with [certain medical conditions](#).

See CDC's [COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens](#) for more information.

### **Which COVID-19 vaccine can my child receive?**

Children ages 5 years and older can get an age-appropriate dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine:

- Adolescents ages 12 and older get the same Pfizer vaccine as adults.
- Children ages 5-11 years get a Pfizer vaccine made for their age group. It has the same active ingredient but is a smaller (1/3<sup>rd</sup>) dose than the regular Pfizer vaccine and is given with a smaller needle.

Both versions of the vaccine are given as 2 doses 21 days apart. It is important to get the second dose to get the full protection from the vaccine. Your child is fully vaccinated 2 weeks after they get the second dose.

The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are not available for children under 18 years of age. Both these vaccines are currently only authorized for people 18 and older.

To learn more about the Pfizer vaccines, see the Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers:

- For [12 years of age and older](#)
- For [5-11 years of age](#)



### What are the vaccine side effects for youth?

Vaccine side effects are similar in children and adults. They can include a sore red arm, feeling tired, headache, muscle aches, fever, or chills. These side effects may limit some daily activities but should go away in a couple of days. Not everyone will get them. These side effects are normal and a sign that the body is building immunity.

### What vaccine should my child get if they turn 12 before their second dose?

The vaccine recommendations are based on the child's age not weight. If your child is 11 years old, they should get the pediatric vaccine regardless of when they turn 12. It is safe and effective for this age group. If your child is turning 12 soon, we do not recommend waiting until after their birthday to get the vaccine.

If your child turns 12 after the first dose, they should get the vaccine for people ages 12 and older for their second dose. But if they do get the 5–11-year-old dose they do not need to repeat it.

### Why is the vaccine only for children ages 5 and over? When will younger children be able to get it?

Children under the age of 5 cannot get vaccinated because clinical studies are still being done in this age group. There isn't enough information yet about how these vaccines work in children ages 6 months to 5 years.

### Where can I get my child vaccinated?

Vaccines are available at hundreds of locations throughout LA County. Locations include pediatrician's offices, clinics, pharmacies, schools, special COVID-19 vaccination sites, and pop-up sites. You do not need an appointment at many locations. Keep an eye out for a vaccine clinic in your neighborhood.

In-home vaccination is also available for people who are homebound. To learn more, visit [VaccinateLACounty.com](https://www.vaccinatelacounty.com) and click on "[How to Get A Vaccine](#)." You can also call the Vaccine Call Center at 833-540-0473. It is open daily from 8am to 8:30pm and can arrange for free transportation to a vaccination site. Be sure to pick a location that offers the Pfizer vaccine that is appropriate for the age of your child.

### What documents do I need to bring to get my child vaccinated?

Youth ages 5-17 need consent from a parent or legal guardian to get vaccinated. Families should check the consent requirements of the place they plan to go to. Check the email or text message you got when you made the appointment to see what documents you need to bring. For information about the requirements at LA County Department of Public Health vaccine sites, visit [VaccinateLACounty.com](https://www.vaccinatelacounty.com) or call the Vaccine Call Center (see above).

### My child is immunocompromised. Can they get a 3rd dose of the Pfizer vaccine?

It depends on their age. If your child is 12 years of age or older and has a [moderately or severely weakened immune system](#), it is recommended that they get a 3rd dose of Pfizer vaccine. They should get their 3rd dose at least 28 days after completing the primary 2 dose series. A 3rd dose is not currently recommended for



children under 12. Booster doses are not recommended for anyone under 18 years of age. Talk with your child's doctor about getting an additional dose.

See CDC webpage [COVID-19 Vaccines for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People](#).

### Can my child get vaccinated against COVID-19 and other diseases at the same time?

Yes. Children ages 5 and over can get a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines, such as flu, measles, and whooping cough. If your child gets a COVID-19 vaccine at a place that doesn't offer other vaccines that they may need, you can go to a different location to get them at any time. There is no need to wait between vaccines.

### Can children with allergies get the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine?

It depends.

- Children who are allergic to things like oral medication, food (including eggs), latex, pets, or pollen, or people who have a family history of allergies, can get vaccinated. The vaccine does not contain eggs, gelatin, latex, or preservatives. You can see a list of ingredients, in the Fact Sheets for Recipients and Caregivers: Pfizer for [12 years of age and older](#); Pfizer for [5-11 years of age](#).
- Talk to your doctor if your child had an allergic reaction to any vaccine or injectable therapy (even if it was not severe). They will help decide if it is safe for them to get vaccinated.
- Children who are allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG) should not get the Pfizer vaccine.

There is a small risk of anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) or other allergic reactions with any vaccine. This is why everyone is observed for a short time after getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Information about allergies may change. To see the latest guidance, see the CDC [COVID-19 Vaccines for People with Allergies](#) webpage and talk to a doctor.

### My child already had COVID-19, should they still get vaccinated?

Yes. Your child should get vaccinated even if they already had COVID-19. We don't yet know how long someone is protected after they have had COVID-19. Getting vaccinated after having COVID-19 infection will boost your child's immunity. It will give them longer protection against COVID-19. This includes protection against variants of the virus that may spread more easily or cause more serious illness.

### Is it safe for children ages 5-17 to get the vaccine?

Yes. After thorough clinical trials, Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine (the same vaccine already safely administered to millions of people age 16 and over) was authorized by the FDA for youth ages 12 to 15 in May. It was authorized for children age 5-11 in October. The studies showed that the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is [safe](#) and [effective](#) in children ages 5-17, as well as in adults. The vaccine now has full approval from the FDA for people age 16 and over and continues to be monitored for safety.

Parents may have concerns about cases of inflammation of the heart muscle ([myocarditis](#)) or outer lining of the heart (pericarditis) in people who received the Pfizer vaccine. Most of the cases were in male adolescents



and young adults and happened within a few days after vaccination. These reactions are rare, estimated to be less than 60 cases per million individuals vaccinated. Because there were no cases of myocarditis in children ages 5-11 in the clinical trials, the rates of myocarditis after vaccination in children 5-11 years of age is unknown, but it is likely to be even lower with the smaller vaccine dose in this age group and the fact that myocarditis is less common in this younger age group.

If your child or anyone else has any of the following symptoms, they are advised to seek medical help right away:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feelings of having a fast beating, fluttering, or pounding heart.

Most patients reported with myocarditis and pericarditis after vaccination who received care improved with medicine and rest and felt better quickly. It is important to note that myocarditis and pericarditis are more common in people who get COVID-19. And the risks to the heart from COVID-19 infection can be more severe. Learn more on the CDC webpage [Myocarditis and Pericarditis Following mRNA COVID-19 Vaccination](#).

Another rare side effect is anaphylaxis. This is a serious allergic reaction that can happen after any vaccination. Everyone is observed for a short time after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. If anaphylaxis does happen it can be treated right away. Learn more on the CDC webpage [What to Do If You Have an Allergic Reaction after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine](#).

The CDC recommends [COVID-19 vaccination](#) for everyone 5 years of age and older. The known risks of COVID-19 illness including hospitalization, long-term health problems, and death outweigh the potential risks of having a rare adverse reaction to vaccination.

### **Can my child get COVID-19 from a COVID-19 vaccine?**

No. Your child cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. It is not possible. None of the vaccines that are used in the US contain any form of the virus that causes COVID-19.

### **Does the vaccine cause infertility?**

No. There is no biological reason or evidence that any vaccine causes fertility problems in females or males. This includes COVID-19 vaccines. Some people who were vaccinated as part of the COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials, and many people who were vaccinated since the trials, have become pregnant. The vaccines do not change a person's DNA and there is no evidence they affect adolescent development.

### **Can the COVID-19 vaccine affect my child's periods?**

Some people have reported a change in their period after getting the vaccine, including heavier flow and painful cramps. We don't yet know if these changes are due to the vaccine. Menstrual changes were not reported from the vaccine trials and no study results are available on this issue yet. It is important to remember, many things can cause a change to menstrual cycles. These include stress, changes in sleep, diet, exercise, and some medicines. Irregular periods are very common in teens. If your child has concerns about their period, it is recommended that they talk to their doctor.



### Will the COVID-19 vaccine have any long-term side effects on my child?

No, it should not. Based on what we know from other vaccines, any rare side effects usually begin within six weeks of getting a vaccine. For this reason, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) required each of the COVID-19 vaccines to be studied for at least eight weeks after the final dose before they authorized them for use. **After they are authorized**, CDC continues to monitor COVID-19 vaccines. If a safety issue occurs, the FDA and the vaccine manufacturer work together to address the safety concern. For example, a problem with a specific lot, a manufacturing issue, or the vaccine itself. Your child is more likely to have long term side effects from getting COVID-19 than from getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

### If my child gets an adverse reaction (possible side effect) after they are vaccinated, how can I report it?

If your child has an adverse reaction after being vaccinated, talk to your doctor, and report the reaction to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (or VAERS). Report it even if you aren't sure that the vaccine caused it. VAERS is an early warning system that the FDA and CDC use to find possible safety problems with any vaccine. To make a report, call 1-800-822-7967 or visit <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>.

If you have a smart phone, you can help the CDC monitor the vaccines by signing up your child for **V-Safe**. **V-safe** is a smartphone-based tool that sends text messages to check in on your child after they have been vaccinated. Each child should be signed up separately. All **v-safe** text messages are sent to the parent or guardian's smartphone.

Do not use VAERS and V-safe for medical advice. Call your doctor or seek medical help if your child has symptoms or health problems that worry you after getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

### How do I talk to my child about the COVID-19 vaccine?

It's important for young people to know the facts about the COVID-19 vaccine. There is a lot of misinformation on COVID-19 and the vaccines on the internet and social media. Be sure to talk to your kids about COVID-19 and answer any questions they may have.

Let them know about the health risks if someone gets COVID-19 and how the vaccine can help protect them. Explain that the vaccine is safe and that it does not have the virus. Go over the side effects with them and let them know that they are normal. Comfort them if they are nervous about getting a vaccine.

Remind them that getting a vaccine will help protect their family and friends. It will also make it safer for them to do things like play sports, hang out with friends, and travel to visit family.

If they have questions or concerns, have them talk to a well-informed, trusted person, such as a family doctor or pediatrician.