

Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine Approved for Kids Ages 5+

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 5 and older get a COVID-19 vaccine. The only vaccine authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in people ages 5-17 is the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The Vaccine is Safe for Children

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has undergone clinical trials for youth, ages 5-15. During clinical trials, 1,131 participants ages 12-15 and 3,100 participants, ages 5-11 received the vaccine. The FDA has determined that the vaccine meets the safety and efficacy standards for emergency use authorization (EUA) for these age groups, finding that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the known and potential risks. Serious health events after COVID-19 vaccination have been rare.



An EUA makes it possible for the FDA to provide vaccines as soon as possible during an emergency while still conducting a thorough review of data collected from clinical trials. The Pfizer vaccine has already received full FDA approval for individuals age 16 and older.

As with other EUAs, the EUA granted for the Pfizer vaccine was also reviewed by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup.

Why Vaccination is Important for Kids & Teens

Vaccination is a key measure to protect everyone, especially those who are at high risk, from COVID-19. Children are generally at lower risk for severe illness from COVID-19. However, children can still get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, spread it to others, become very ill, and experience other complications including multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), a condition that causes different organs to become inflamed, and "long COVID."

COVID-19 vaccination for children 5 and older has many benefits, such as

- Protecting your child from COVID-19, including variants like Delta
- Protecting vulnerable family members or younger siblings who are not eligible for vaccination
- Fewer sick days and less time off from school, sports and other activities

Vaccination not only protects your child, but also helps protect your family, the kids in your child's classroom and the community.

Dose

While the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine used is the same, the size of the dose for children ages 5-11 is one-third of the dose given to individuals age 12 and older. Dosage is based on age on the day of vaccination, not on weight. The vaccine comes in a different vial with different packaging, and different, smaller needles designed for children are used for ages 5-11.

The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses. Children should receive their second dose three weeks after their first.

Children Turning 12

If you are seeking vaccination for a child who will be turning 12 soon, you may wonder which dose they should receive. CDC recommends that individuals receive the dose that is appropriate for their age. Children 11 and younger should receive the pediatric vaccine and children 12 and older should receive the adult vaccine, even if this means switching vaccines over the course of their primary vaccine series. If you are considering waiting to get the vaccine until your child turns 12, speak with your child's provider to weigh the pros and cons.

Before Vaccination

Your child may experience side effects after the vaccine that are similar to what adults experience. Make sure to talk with them about it beforehand so they know what to expect.

- It is not recommended that you give your child pain relievers prior to vaccination as a way to prevent side effects.
- Tell the person administering the vaccine about any allergies your child has. After receiving the vaccine, you and your child will need to wait 15-30 minutes for observation in case of severe allergic reactions so they can be treated right away.
- Children should be seated or lying down during and for 15 minutes after vaccination to prevent fainting or related injuries.

Find an Appointment

Pediatric COVID-19 vaccine is becoming available at several area provider's offices as well as at pharmacies enrolled in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 vaccination, which includes Rite Aid and Walgreens.

Locations providing pediatric vaccines can be found on the Vaccine Locator website at vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov. You can also find community vaccination clinics at schools throughout Spokane County by visiting srhd.org/events.

Consent

Make sure to check with the clinic first regarding vaccination policies for children 5 – 15 years of age, including what is required in terms of documentation of a parent or legal guardian's consent.

After Vaccination

Your child may experience some side effects after receiving the vaccine. These are normal and mean the vaccine is working. The health risks associated with getting COVID-19 are greater than the risks of vaccine side effects.

- Your child may experience a sore arm with pain, redness or swelling. They may also feel tired, have a headache or muscle pain and experience chills, fever or nausea. These side effects should go away within a few days.
- Talk to your child's provider about what steps you can take at home to lessen symptoms, including providing a non-aspirin pain reliever. A cool, damp cloth on the injection site can help with pain.

