

## KEY MESSAGES IN SUPPORT OF COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 5

### OVERVIEW

COVID-19 vaccination among children younger than 5 years of age will allow nearly 20 million more children to be protected against COVID-19, including severe outcomes like hospitalization. Vaccinating children 6 months and older is a critical opportunity to protect them from severe illness, especially those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, such as certain racial and ethnic groups and children with disabilities. COVID-19 vaccination among younger children can also help decrease the strain on the healthcare system and provide families with greater confidence with children participating in childcare, school, and other activities with less risk for serious COVID-19 illness.

### TOPLINE KEY MESSAGES

#### **CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated against COVID-19.**

- Parents make decisions every day to protect their children, and now COVID-19 vaccines are available to protect all children 6 months and older.
- This new recommendation adds nearly 20 million children younger than 5 years of age to be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines.
- COVID-19 vaccination for younger children is a critical opportunity to prevent severe illness, especially among those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including those from certain racial and ethnic groups and children with underlying medical conditions, disabilities, or special healthcare needs.
- Both the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines have been approved for children ages 6 months through 5 years.
- The Moderna vaccine for children ages 6 months through 5 years will be a two-dose primary series.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children ages 6 months through 4 years will be a three-dose primary series.

#### **Vaccinating everyone, including children 6 months and older, provides the best defense against serious outcomes related to COVID-19.**

- Just like adults, children can become severely ill from COVID-19, be hospitalized, and even die. Children can experience short- and long-term health complications that can affect their mental and physical health and quality of life.
- There is no way to predict if a child will develop a severe or mild case of COVID-19. Even healthy children without underlying medical conditions can get severe COVID-19 or suffer from long-term health complications.
- Vaccinating this younger age group helps lessen the strain on families by providing greater confidence with children participating in childcare, school, and other activities.
- COVID-19 vaccination reduces the strain on the healthcare system.
- Children who have previously had COVID-19 should still get vaccinated, as vaccination offers added protection.

#### **Both COVID-19 vaccines for children are safe and protect against severe illness from COVID-19.**

- Thousands of children were part of robust clinical trials to evaluate the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines and how well they worked.
- The decision by FDA and CDC to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for younger children followed an in-depth review of available safety, immune response, and efficacy data.
- COVID-19 vaccines have undergone—and will continue to undergo—the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.
- Parents and caregivers are encouraged to register their children for [v-safe](#) to share how their child is feeling after vaccination. V-safe uses confidential text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins following COVID-19 vaccination.

- To help enroll more children in [v-safe](#), providers are encouraged to give families information on v-safe (and why it is important and beneficial) at the time of vaccination.
- Children and teens can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other routinely recommended vaccines, including a flu vaccine, at the same visit.

**Parents and caregivers should get their child vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine that is available to them.**

- To find COVID-19 vaccines for children, parents and caregivers can talk to a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, call the local health department or clinic, or visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

**After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, children may have some side effects similar to those seen with other routine childhood vaccines.**

- Reported side effects tend to be mild and temporary. Some children have no side effects.
- Serious health events, like myocarditis, after COVID-19 vaccination in children are rare. When they are reported, side effects occur most frequently within a few days after vaccination.

**The benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks.**

- The known risks of COVID-19 and its severe complications—such as long-term health problems, hospitalization, and even death—outweigh the potential risks of having a rare adverse reaction to vaccination.

## COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

**Information for jurisdictions, clinicians, vaccine providers, and community partners to plan and implement vaccination for children who are eligible:**

- [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [Planning COVID-19 Vaccination for Children | CDC](#)
  - [Updated Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccination Operational Planning Guide-Information for Vaccine for Children 6 Months through 4 Years, and Children 6 Months through 5 Years Old \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Resources to Promote the COVID-19 Vaccine for Children & Teens | CDC](#)
- [Equity in Childhood COVID-19 Vaccination \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#)
- [Ways Health Departments Can Help Increase COVID-19 Vaccinations | CDC](#)
- [What to Consider When Planning to Operate a COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic](#)
- [How Schools and Early Care and Education \(ECE\) Programs Can Support COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
  - [Hosting Vaccination Clinics: Best Practices for School Districts and Early Care and Education \(ECE\) Programs](#)
  - [Customizable Content for School and Childcare-Located Vaccination Clinics](#)
  - [Considerations for Planning School-Located Vaccination Clinics](#)

**Information for parents and caregivers:**

- [COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens | CDC](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination in Children | CDC](#)
- [6 Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccination for Children | CDC](#)
- [V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker | CDC](#)