



# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## ABOUT PEDIATRIC COVID-19 VACCINES

### **What are the current recommendations for COVID-19 vaccines for children?**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that all eligible children, who do not have contraindications, get a COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 vaccinations are approved for children ages 6 months and older.

### **Why does my child need the vaccine if COVID-19 is not as dangerous for them?**

There have been more than 15.5 million cases reported among children as of March 16, 2023. Many children, especially those under 5 years old, have been hospitalized due to COVID-19. And, although the death rate among children is lower than for adults, the death rate is still a problem. Children aren't supposed to die at the same rate as adults.

### **What if my child already had COVID-19?**

They should still be vaccinated. Getting vaccinated helps to protect someone from getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19. Some studies also show unvaccinated people are more likely to get COVID-19 again if they have already had it compared to vaccinated people.

### **Are the side effects of the vaccine dangerous?**

Mild side effects are expected. Common side effects include a sore arm, headache, fever, and tiredness - but these usually don't last long and are not serious or dangerous. These are signs that the vaccine is working to stimulate the immune system. Even if you or your child don't get side effects, the vaccine is still working! More serious side effects are extremely rare and much less common than the complications from getting COVID-19.

### **Can a child get other non-COVID vaccines on the same day?**

Yes! Children and others should get more than one vaccine at the same time if they need them!





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### **Can my child receive a bivalent vaccine?**

If they received their primary series (2 doses of Pfizer or Moderna) AND it has been more than 2 months since their last dose, yes!

### **A child is having a birthday soon or between doses, which vaccine should they get?**

COVID-19 vaccines are age specific. A child should get the vaccine product that is recommended for their age at the time of administration. This might mean they get one dosage when they are a certain age and a different one when they are older! Parents should not delay a vaccine because a birthday is coming.

### **Why is the vaccine dosage not by weight?**

Vaccines work differently than other medications. They train up the immune system and do most of the work before someone gets sick. That is why a very small dose is all the immune system cells need to learn how to stop germs. Vaccines work based on how the child's immune system works at different ages, not based on how big they are (their weight), like antibiotics or other medications do.

### **Is one vaccine manufacturer recommended over the other?**

No. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccine products are proven to be safe and effective for children 6 months and older, and Novavax for children 12 years and older.

### **Where can my child get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

At your child's doctor/pediatrician's office! Also at your local health departments, or through pharmacies depending on your child's age (3 years and older).

### **What is the risk of my child developing myocarditis after the vaccine?**

This is very, very rare. The risk of myocarditis is greater from COVID-19 infection than from COVID-19 vaccines. Myocarditis from the vaccine is milder, nearly all those affected make a full recovery and it usually doesn't last as long.

Illinois Chapter

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