

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT VACCINATING CHILDREN

The COVID-19 vaccination is now available for children as young as 5. Like vaccines for adults, they are free.

Why should school-aged children get vaccinated?

Even though the virus tends to be more severe in adults than children, COVID-19 is causing preventable suffering among children. Pediatricians and other doctors' groups are pleased to be able to offer the vaccine to their young patients and are gearing up to help families decide whether to vaccinate their children.

Are kid doses the same size as adult ones?

No. Children 5 – 11 receive a third of the dose given to teens and adults. Like everybody else, the younger kids will get two shots, three weeks apart.

Are there safety concerns? Are there any side effects?

The FDA found no safety concerns though there were some annoying post-shot reactions, including sore arms and fatigue but children are less likely to have fevers.

How well do the shots work?

Pfizer's pediatric vaccine has proved 91% effective at preventing symptomatic infection.

Will vaccinated children still need to wear masks?

Health experts say current CDC guidance recommending fully-vaccinated people wear masks inside may remain in place even after children get vaccinated.

My kids are scared of shots. What should I tell them?

Health professionals suggest that you give children enough time to prepare – so have an age-appropriate discussion beforehand. Let them choose where they sit, whether it's on the table or on your lap. They can choose which arm they get it into. They can choose whether or not they look or they don't. They can distract themselves with a toy or a book or singing.

It's really important for parents to manage their own fears and anxieties. Because if a child sees you being worried or concerned, that may make them more anxious about the situation. Parents and children are encouraged to talk to your pediatrician or healthcare provider.

Where are the shots available?

The shots are being offered at pediatricians' offices, health clinics and pharmacies. Walgreens and CVS are also giving the shots. Some school systems also plan to host vaccination clinics, too.

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