



COVID Vaccines for Kids 6 Months & Older: FAQs for Families

Babies and young kids can get a COVID shot now that the vaccine is recommended for age 6 months to under 5 years old. There are two COVID vaccine products and both are proven to be safe and effective.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2022-058700>) (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0618-children-vaccine.html>) (CDC) recommend the COVID-19 vaccine for children in this age group. There is no preference for the Moderna vaccine or the Pfizer and BioNTech vaccine. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their infants and young children vaccinated with either vaccine.



Vaccination against COVID-19 is the best way to reduce the negative impact of this pandemic in all age groups.

You may have questions, and your pediatrician is here to help you make the right choice. Here's what you should know.

Why does the youngest age group need 2 doses of one product but 3 doses of the other product?

The two vaccines use different amounts of mRNA and have other differences in composition. Parents should not choose the vaccine for their child based on the number of doses, because they may be the same number in the end.

- **The 3-dose vaccine (Pfizer) was first tested using 2 doses.** Adding the third dose was found to be more effective at protecting babies and young children from the omicron variant that is that is the most common variant spreading in the United States right now. The vaccine is a 3-dose series.
- **The 2-dose vaccine (Moderna) was tested using 2 doses.** They were found to be safe and effective. Right now, Moderna is studying a third dose of their vaccine. It is possible that the vaccine also may turn into a 3-dose series.

Children will have highest degree of protection two weeks after they get the last required dose.

Is one COVID vaccine better than the other?

The AAP does not recommend one vaccine over the other. They have both been proven to be safe and effective. Parents should have their children vaccinated with either vaccine. Depending on the vaccine product, your baby or young child will need two or three doses. Most parents should get whichever vaccine is most available to them. In some instances, they may have only one option. This also is common for other types of childhood vaccines in which there are multiple manufacturers.

Where can babies and young kids get a COVID vaccine?

It is always best to begin with your child's pediatrician. Your child's pediatrician is a trusted source who knows your child and can answer all your questions about the COVID vaccine.

If your child's pediatrician has either or both vaccine, they can arrange for your child to get vaccinated. If not, they can help you sort through options. The vaccines are expected to start to become available for children very soon after the

recommendations have been finalized. The COVID-19 vaccine may be given at the same time as other immunizations, so you can ask about catching up on other vaccinations at the same visit. Public health agencies, many ^{Back to Top} clinic settings and pharmacies also are planning to provide the vaccine.

Will my baby have side effects from the COVID shot, and are they serious?

Most parents are familiar with the minor side effects that vaccines can cause in children. The same side effects that we see with routine childhood vaccines have been seen in the studies of these vaccines. They are things like soreness and redness where the shot goes in. Some babies and children don't feel well later in the day of the shot or on the next day. A small number of vaccinated children get fever—and very few get high fever. Usually, it lasts only a day or two.

Thousands of children were in the studies, and there were no children with serious allergic reactions, heart inflammation or other serious problems related to the vaccines that may worry parents.

When should they get a vaccine if they had COVID infection?

If they have had a COVID infection, they should receive a COVID-19 vaccination according to CDC guidelines. The benefits of the COVID vaccine outweigh the risks of being infected with the virus, which could include hospitalization, long COVID (</English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Post-COVID-Conditions-in-Children-and-Teens.aspx>), multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and death.

How well do the COVID vaccines work in the youngest age group?

Babies and young children 6 months to 5 years who get COVID vaccines likely will get protection similar to the protection older kids get. The level of protection from symptoms of COVID infection is less than 50%. Both vaccines are expected to be much more effective in preventing hospitalization and other serious issues.

Remember

It's more than two years since the COVID-19 pandemic started, and vaccination is still the best way to prevent serious illness or complications like long-COVID. Now the youngest age can get the vaccine and be protected.

The COVID vaccine is the most closely studied in history. The CDC continues to monitor the vaccine and encourages everyone to report any side effects by participating in v-safe (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html>), an after-vaccination health check-in program.

More information

- [What Should Parents Know About the COVID Vaccine for Kids Under 5? \(/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/what-should-parents-know-about-the-covid-vaccine-for-kids-under-5.aspx\)](/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/what-should-parents-know-about-the-covid-vaccine-for-kids-under-5.aspx)
- [COVID Vaccines Authorized for Children Ages 6 Months & Up \(/English/news/Pages/aap-applauds-approval-of-safe-effective-covid-19-vaccines-for-children-ages-6-months-and-older.aspx\)](/English/news/Pages/aap-applauds-approval-of-safe-effective-covid-19-vaccines-for-children-ages-6-months-and-older.aspx)
- [Febrile Seizures in Children \(/English/health-issues/conditions/fever/Pages/Febrile-Seizures.aspx\)](/English/health-issues/conditions/fever/Pages/Febrile-Seizures.aspx)
- [COVID-19 Vaccines in Infants, Children and Adolescents \(https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/doi/10.1542/peds.2022-058700/188297/COVID-19-Vaccines-in-Infants-Children-and\) \(AAP.org\)](https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/doi/10.1542/peds.2022-058700/188297/COVID-19-Vaccines-in-Infants-Children-and)

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