

## For Children Ages 5 and Older: WHAT PARENTS AND GUARDIANS SHOULD KNOW

### Which vaccine can my child get?

The **Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine** is the only vaccine authorized for children 5 to 18 years old. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are only authorized for use in adults ages 18 and older. The Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 has the **same active ingredients but is a smaller dose** compared to the Pfizer vaccine for adolescents and adults. Unlike many medications, vaccine dosages are based on the child's age on the day of vaccination and not their size or weight.



### Why should my child get vaccinated?

- ▶ Some children can get very sick from COVID-19, and may need to be hospitalized. In rare cases, they may die. **By getting vaccinated, your child will have protection against severe illness** and reduce the changes of spreading the virus to other, possibly more vulnerable people.
- ▶ **COVID-19 vaccines provide good protection against variants**, including the Delta and Omicron variants. The more people who get vaccinated, the less chance the virus has to mutate.
- ▶ Medical experts are learning about the effects of COVID-19 in children such as multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C). MIS-C can cause parts of the body to become inflamed including the heart, lungs, brain, and other organs. The best thing you can do to **prevent MIS-C and protect your child against COVID-19** is to get them vaccinated. Learn more about MIS-C at [www.dhs.wi.gov/disease/mis-c.htm](http://www.dhs.wi.gov/disease/mis-c.htm).
- ▶ After having COVID-19, some children develop long COVID. Long COVID can cause children to experience new, returning, or ongoing symptoms such as brain fog and chronic fatigue. One of the best ways to protect your child from **the long-term effects of COVID-19** is to get them vaccinated.
- ▶ **Children and adults that are up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines do not have to quarantine** after exposure to someone with COVID-19, but should take additional steps to protect themselves and others. Visit [www.dhs.wi.gov/covid-19/close-contacts.htm](http://www.dhs.wi.gov/covid-19/close-contacts.htm) for next steps after exposure.

### How many doses should my child get?

In order to be considered fully vaccinated, your child needs **two doses** of the Pfizer vaccine separated by at least 21 days. People with specific medical conditions or receiving medical treatments that cause them to be moderately to severely immunocompromised are recommended to get a **third, additional primary dose of Pfizer** because they may not have received adequate protection from their initial vaccine series.

For the best protection and to be considered **up to date**, everyone 12 years and older is recommended to also get a **booster dose** of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at least 5 months after completing their initial primary series. Make sure to mark your calendar so you know when your child needs to come back for their next dose.

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### Is the vaccine safe for my child?

The Pfizer vaccine has gone through the same **safety tests** and met the same standards as all other vaccines authorized in the United States. **Millions of children have gotten the COVID-19 vaccine safely.** Very few people have had any severe side effects. In fact, people are more likely to have serious long-term effects from getting sick from COVID-19. If you have questions about vaccine safety, connect with your child's doctor.

### How does the vaccine work?

The Pfizer vaccine is an mRNA vaccine. The mRNA in the vaccine gives your cells instructions on how to make coronavirus spike proteins. Those proteins help your immune system produce specific antibodies that defend against COVID-19. So if the real virus enters your body, your immune system can recognize it and fight it off to help prevent you from getting sick. **mRNA vaccines do not put a weakened or inactivated virus into your body. They cannot give someone COVID-19.** Your cells break down and get rid of the mRNA as soon as it is finished using the instructions. The vaccine does not affect or interact with your DNA in any way. **Vaccines give us protection against COVID-19 without ever having to risk getting hospitalized or dying from COVID-19.**

### What else should I know about the COVID-19 vaccine?



Some people have temporary side effects after vaccination such as pain or temporary side effects after vaccination such as pain or swelling on the arm where they got the vaccine. This is normal and means the body is building up protection against COVID-19.



No vaccine is 100% effective, so we expect some people who are fully vaccinated to get COVID-19. Even with COVID-19 variants circulating, the COVID-19 vaccines are extremely effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death caused by COVID-19. People who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated are much more likely to get severely sick from COVID-19 than people who are fully vaccinated.



The vaccine is free for everyone. You do not need an ID or health insurance to get it.

### Where can my child get vaccinated?

Check [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), [www.dhs.wi.gov/covid-19/vaccine-get.htm](https://www.dhs.wi.gov/covid-19/vaccine-get.htm), or call 211 to learn where your child can get vaccinated.

### Where can I learn more?

Learn more about COVID-19 vaccines and what you can expect when getting your child vaccinated at: [www.dhs.wi.gov/covid-19/vaccine.htm](https://www.dhs.wi.gov/covid-19/vaccine.htm).