



Give your child the power to fight COVID-19.

Children under 5 are now eligible to receive the children's COVID-19 vaccine.

The Pfizer-BioNTech (indicated for ages 6 months through 4 years) and Moderna (indicated for ages 6 months through 5 years) COVID-19 vaccines are now authorized for use. Just like the adult vaccine and other pediatric vaccines, these vaccines have been studied in clinical trials and are safe and effective in younger children. By becoming fully vaccinated, children are protected from serious illness, long-term effects, and death.

Q What are the differences between the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for younger children?

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have been studied in clinical trials, and both vaccines are safe and effective in preventing COVID-19 among young children. The vaccines differ in their age group indication, number and timing of doses, and dosage sizes. **Talk with your child's health care provider about which vaccine is right for your child.**

Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna
6 months through 4 years	6 months through 5 years
Three doses	Two doses
21 days between first two doses; 2 months between second and third dose	28 days between doses

Q Where can children get the vaccine?

Health care providers' offices (like pediatricians or family physicians), school-based clinics, and retail pharmacies all offer the free COVID-19 vaccine. Visit vaccinate.virginia.gov or call (877) VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682) to find a site near you. Customer service by phone is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time. Providers may carry one or both vaccines.

Q Is the vaccine for younger children different from the vaccine for older children?

The vaccine has been specifically formulated for younger age groups but works the same as vaccines for older children and adults. The dosage and number of doses needed for the primary series depends on the vaccine brand (Pfizer or Moderna). It is important that children ages 6 months through 4 or 5 years receive the vaccine meant for their age group.

Q What side effects are common in this age group after vaccination?

Most side effects are mild and go away within a few days. Commonly reported side effects include fever, pain at the injection site, and tiredness. Fever is a sign that your child is making an immune response to the vaccine, although not every child will develop this side effect. The benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the risks of these side effects.

Q Could the COVID-19 vaccine affect my child's growth or development?

No, there is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines affect children's growth or development, including brain or bone development or future fertility.

Q If my child has already had COVID-19, will they still benefit from COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes. Even if your child has had COVID-19, they will benefit from vaccination. Vaccination provides stronger protection against COVID-19 and its potential long-term effects than natural immunity from previous infection.

Q What should I do if my child gets any of the common COVID-19 side effects?

Over-the-counter, non-aspirin pain relievers, like acetaminophen or ibuprofen, can help reduce most side effects. These medications should only be taken after — not before — your child gets the shot. Please consult with your child's health care provider if you are uncertain of the appropriate dose for your child. Ibuprofen should not be used in children under 6 months of age.

Contact a healthcare provider if:

- **Redness or tenderness increases at the injection site after 24 hours.**
- **Side effects are severe or persist beyond a few days.**

Remember to enroll your child with v-safe, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's after-vaccination health checker, at vsafe.cdc.gov. You can report side effects to the CDC and receive reminders when it's time to get the next dose.

Q Can a COVID-19 vaccinated mother continue to breastfeed after her child gets vaccinated?

Yes! There is no reason to stop breastfeeding a child who is vaccinated, as long as the mother wishes to continue.

Q Given that most children do not get severely ill from COVID-19, why should parents consider vaccinating them?

Although rare, severe outcomes like hospitalization or death can occur from COVID-19 illness in children with no underlying medical conditions. During the Omicron peak, unvaccinated children aged 5–11 years were twice as likely to be hospitalized compared to vaccinated children. COVID-19 vaccines are currently the best defense against illness.

Children are also at risk of developing long-term issues like Long COVID (also known as 'Post COVID Conditions') or Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (also known as 'MIS-C').

Fully vaccinated children are less likely to develop COVID-19 and pass it on to others.

Q How do we know there aren't negative long-term side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?

Historically, almost all vaccine side effects happen within the first two months of vaccination. For this reason, during clinical trials, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) collected data on each of the authorized COVID-19 vaccines for young children for a minimum of two months after the final dose. CDC, FDA, and other federal agencies continue to monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines even now that the vaccines are in use. Millions of people ages 5 and older have already safely received a COVID-19 vaccine.