

# The State of Our Children: COVID-19 Vaccine and Kids



November 9, 2021

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective in preventing serious illness, hospitalization and death for those 12 years of age and older. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has granted emergency use authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children 5-11 years of age, extending protection from COVID-19 to approximately 28 million children across the country. Based on safety and efficacy data presented to the FDA and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Valley Children's is in alignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendation: **everyone 5 years of age or older who is eligible should get vaccinated.**

## Is the vaccine safe for kids ages 5-11?

Yes. The vaccine's safety was studied in approximately 3,100 children ages 5-11 who received the vaccine and no serious side effects have been detected in the ongoing study. The FDA has determined that the Pfizer vaccine has met the criteria for emergency use authorization based on the scientific evidence available.

## Is the vaccine effective?

Yes. According to the FDA, after receiving the vaccination, the immune responses of children 5-11 years of age were comparable to those of individuals 16-25 years of age. Studies presented to the FDA found the vaccine to be 90.7% effective in preventing COVID-19 infection, and 100% effective in preventing hospitalization from COVID-19.

## How is the vaccine administered for children ages 5-11? Is the dosage different? Do kids receive the same vaccine as adults?

The Pfizer vaccine is administered as a two-dose primary series, three weeks apart, but is a lower dose (10 micrograms) than what is administered to individuals 12 years of age and older (30 micrograms). The vaccine itself is the same vaccine as adults receive but the dosage for vaccines is based on age, which is different from other pediatric medications where dosage is based on a child's size or weight.

## What are the side effects in children?

The most common side effects are injection site pain, fatigue and headache. Other less common side effects are injection site redness and swelling, muscle and/or joint pain, chills, fever, swollen lymph nodes, nausea and decreased appetite. More children reported side effects after the second dose than after the first dose. Side effects were generally mild to moderate in severity and occurred within two days after vaccination, and most went away within one to two days. By every measure, the potential side effects of the vaccine—as unlikely as they are to occur—are far less risky than contracting the disease itself.

## How can we be sure the vaccine is safe for kids in the long-term?

Vaccines have been well-developed and trusted tools of medicine and public health for generations, and adverse events are reported infrequently for all of the leading childhood vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccine for children is no different as the FDA testing process did not reveal any serious adverse events during the trial or for the two months following the vaccination. A benefit-risk assessment is an integral part of the vaccine review process to ensure that the risk of the disease is greater than the risk of the vaccine. Given the potential harm of COVID-19, the benefit of the vaccine improves a child's overall safety.

## Should children who will soon turn 12 years old wait to get the higher dosage?

No. Kids are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible. If a child is 11 years old at the time of the first vaccine, then the second dose would be the same as the first shot. There is no need to wait for them to turn 12 to receive the "stronger" dose.

## Can my child get other immunizations when they get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Absolutely. Ensuring that kids are current on all immunizations is key to helping them stay healthy and safe. Kids can receive routine childhood immunizations—including their annual flu shot—at the same time they receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine does not eliminate the need for their annual flu shot.

## How do I get my child vaccinated?

Parents can contact their child's primary care provider or visit [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://www.myturn.ca.gov) to schedule an appointment or find a COVID-19 vaccine clinic, including those held at Valley Children's Hospital. Other resources include your local pharmacy, health clinic or county health department.

## Resources for More Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention • [www.cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)  
Food & Drug Administration • [www.fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)

American Academy of Pediatrics • [www.aap.org](https://www.aap.org)  
Valley Children's COVID-19 Center • [valleychildrens.org/covid19](https://valleychildrens.org/covid19)

## The Impact of COVID-19 on Kids

The pandemic has disrupted every aspect of childhood—emotionally, physically, developmentally and psychologically—and the full scope of the impact on kids will continue to unfold for generations to come.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), since the start of the pandemic, approximately 1.9 million children ages 5-11 years have been infected with COVID-19. Federal data also shows more than 8,300 have been hospitalized, and 94 have died—a number that puts COVID-19 in the top 10 causes of death for children 5-11. Most recently, the AAP, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Children’s Hospital Association joined together to declare a national emergency in children’s mental health due to the toll of the pandemic.

### Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (November 2, 2021). CDC recommends pediatric COVID-19 vaccine for children 5 to 11 years [Press release]. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1102-PediatricCOVID-19Vaccine.html>

Jenco, Melissa. American Academy of Pediatrics News. COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11 receives final approval. (November 2, 2021). <https://www.aapublications.org/news/2021/11/02/cdc-pfizer-covid-vaccine-children-110221>

U.S. Food & Drug Administration. (October 29, 2021). FDA authorizes Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in children 5 through 11 years of age [Press release]. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-authorizes-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-use-children-5-through-11-years-age>

## Current Data and Trends Across Valley Children’s Healthcare Network (ages 0-20) (as of November 1, 2021)

	Tests Administered	Positive Tests	Positivity Rate	Hospitalizations
OCTOBER	▼ 4,397	▼ 206 (126*)	▼ 4.7%	▼ 40
SEPTEMBER	5,170	322 (218*)	6.2%	55
AUGUST	5,051	436 (336*)	8.6%	42

\*COVID+ patients in Valley Children’s Emergency Department

**WEAR A MASK • WASH/SANITIZE HANDS • GET VACCINATED**



For more information visit [valleychildrens.org/covid19](https://valleychildrens.org/covid19) or email [contactus@valleychildrens.org](mailto:contactus@valleychildrens.org)