

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN & YOUTH FROM COVID-19

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

FACT SHEET

Accessible link: www.cdc.gov/protect-children

Everyone ages 6 months and older can now get vaccinated against COVID-19, and everyone ages 5 years and older can get a booster if eligible. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, thousands of children and youth in the United States have been hospitalized with COVID-19, and hundreds have died. Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is a key step in protecting children and youth from getting very sick from COVID-19. Staying at home when sick, testing, wearing a mask when appropriate, handwashing, and covering coughs and sneezes are also important steps we should continue to take to protect our children and youth from COVID-19 and slow the spread of the virus in our households and communities.

Getting accurate, timely, and trusted information is critical to help everyone in our community address questions and concerns about how to protect children and youth from COVID-19. Healthcare providers, schools, and other trusted community organizations and agencies are all sources for sharing credible information that addresses parent and caregiver concerns about COVID-19 in children and youth, including information about the COVID-19 vaccines.

★ Here Are Answers to Questions You May Have About Protecting Your Child or Youth from COVID-19

Can my child or youth get COVID-19?

- Children and youth of all ages can get COVID-19.
- Children and youth can get very sick if they get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, and some need to be hospitalized.
- Children and youth can have long-lasting health problems (sometimes referred to as long COVID) if they get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Children and youth can spread COVID-19 to other people, including those at home and school.

Can COVID-19 vaccines make my child or youth sick with COVID-19?

- No. None of the authorized COVID-19 vaccines in the United States contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.
- Children and youth may experience side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Most side effects after vaccination are mild and temporary. These side effects are normal signs that their body is building protection.
- Serious side effects like allergic reactions, myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle), or pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart) after COVID-19 vaccination are rare.
- CDC monitors for any health problems that happen after vaccination. Parents and caregivers can sign up for [v-safe](#), CDC's After Vaccination Health Checker. [v-safe](#) provides quick and confidential health check-ins via text messages and web surveys so you can quickly and easily share with CDC how you or your child or youth feel after getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Why is it important for me and my child or youth to get vaccinated for COVID-19?

- Children and youth of all ages can get COVID-19 and some of them can get really sick and need to be hospitalized.
- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19.
- Getting children and youth vaccinated against COVID-19 helps keep them safely participating in child and youth care, school, sports, and other group activities.

Do the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines change DNA inside human cells?

- No. mRNA COVID-19 vaccines cannot change or interact with a person's DNA. The genetic material delivered by mRNA vaccines does not enter the nucleus of your cells, which is where your DNA is kept.

Does my child or youth still need the vaccine if they already had COVID-19?

- Even if you or your child or youth already had COVID-19, you or your child or youth should still get vaccinated. People can get added protection by getting vaccinated after having been infected.

Do COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility or affect puberty?

- There is no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, can cause fertility problems in men or women. There is no evidence that vaccine ingredients, including mRNA, or antibodies made after COVID-19 vaccination would cause any problems with becoming pregnant now or in the future.
- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccine affects puberty.



How do I know which COVID-19 vaccine information sources are accurate?

- Before considering vaccine information online, check that the information comes from a credible source, such as your primary care provider, a pediatrician, or another healthcare provider, and is updated on a regular basis.
- Information from CDC is researched, written, and approved by public health and healthcare experts and reviewed and updated as needed.
- It is also important to review and discuss information you see online or that someone tells you with a trusted health professional, such as a pediatrician or another healthcare provider.

Where can I find a COVID-19 vaccine?

- The federal government is providing COVID-19 vaccines free of charge to all people living in the United States, regardless of their immigration or health insurance status.
- Check with a healthcare provider about whether they offer COVID-19 vaccination for children or youth.
- Check with your state's health department about where you can get a COVID-19 vaccine for your child or youth near where you live.
- Check your local pharmacy's website to see if vaccination walk-ins or appointments are available for children and youth.
- Search www.vaccines.gov, text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233.

Additional Resources:

- [COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens](#)
- [6 Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccination for Children](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination for Children and Teens with Disabilities](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination for Children and Teens](#)
- CDC.GOV/coronavirus
- COVID.gov

What else can I do to protect my child or youth?

- CDC recommends using [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) to determine which COVID-19 prevention strategies are recommended, including masking, to reduce medically significant illness and lessen the strain on the healthcare system.
- At low and medium COVID-19 Community Levels, masking is optional.
- When the COVID-19 Community Level is high, CDC recommends universal indoor masking in schools and early care and education programs and other community settings.
- For high-risk activities such as indoor sports, crowded outdoor events, and extracurricular activities such as band, choir, and theater, you can consider masking as a prevention strategy for your child or youth, especially during periods of high COVID-19 Community Levels.
- CDC also recommends keeping your child or youth at home when they are sick and getting them tested for COVID-19 if they have symptoms. Diagnostic testing is recommended for anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or who has potentially been exposed to someone with COVID-19. Screening should be considered if you live in areas with medium or high COVID-19 Community Levels.
- Frequent handwashing, checking with your child's or youth's school to see if policies are in place to increase ventilation, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces are other important ways to keep children and youth safe.
- Ensure your child or youth is up to date on all other routine vaccinations.
- Check in with your child or youth often to see how they are handling what is going on. You can do this by asking them specific questions about how they are feeling both at home and at school.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention