



CDC Call to Action: Add Routine & COVID-19 Vaccinations to the Back-to-School Checklist

Late summer is usually a time many families begin preparing to send their children back to school. This is a crucial time when healthcare providers need to communicate with families to add routine childhood and COVID-19 vaccinations to their back-to-school checklist.

During the 2020-2021 school year, vaccination coverage among kindergarteners nationwide dropped more than one percent. With most schools now back to in-person learning, efforts must be made to ensure:

- **All** school-aged children are up to date on their routine vaccines and have received recommended COVID-19 vaccines.
- Routine vaccination coverage is equitably distributed and sufficiently high to protect children, their families, and their communities against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Healthcare providers are trusted sources of information for parents and guardians. They can also help families make the informed decision to vaccinate. Here are some ways they can help catch school-aged children up on vaccination.

Healthcare providers can help make vaccines more accessible

- Send reminders to families whose children are behind on well-child visits and routine vaccination.
- Notify families when children are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. Tell them where they can find COVID-19 vaccines for their children if they're not offered in the office or clinic.
- Offer vaccination-only appointments or hold vaccination clinics.
- Administer COVID-19 vaccines at the same time as other routinely recommended vaccines, if recommended and appropriate.

Help share the facts

Catch-up vaccination will require efforts from healthcare systems, healthcare providers, schools, state and local governments, and families by sharing the facts about routine and COVID-19 vaccines and answering families' questions using resources such as [CDC's Quick Conversation Guide on COVID-19 Vaccines for Children](#).

Facts about routine vaccines

- Vaccines are [safe and effective](#) for your child to receive at the recommended age, and at the recommended dose.
- Did you know your child may be eligible for free vaccines? CDC's [Vaccines for Children](#) (VFC) program helps provide free vaccines to children who qualify.
- Getting your young child vaccinated may reduce disruptions to childcare and in-person learning and activities

Facts about COVID-19 vaccines

- Clinical trials and ongoing safety monitoring show that [COVID-19 vaccines are safe](#) for children 6 months and older.
- Emerging evidence indicates people can get added protection by getting vaccinated after having been infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. So even if a child has had COVID-19, they should still get vaccinated.
- COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines can be given at the same visit.

Healthcare providers should make strong recommendations

Healthcare providers should be encouraged to use every visit – including well-child checks, sports physicals, and other appointments – as an opportunity to administer COVID-19 vaccines, as well as other vaccines that are due or might have been missed because of pandemic-related disruptions. Routine vaccination and well-child visits or check-ups are all key to helping keep children safely in school, childcare, and participating in other activities.

Fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, but they can be infected with and spread the virus. There is no way to tell in advance if a child will get a severe or mild case.

Vaccinating children is the single best way to protect them from [post-COVID conditions](#) and severe illness associated with COVID-19. Health departments have reported thousands of cases of [multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children](#) (MIS-C) since the beginning of the pandemic. Vaccination reduces the likelihood of MIS-C in children ages 12–18 years by 91%.

According to the [CDC COVID DATA TRACKER](#), 75% of children 12-18 years of age are fully vaccinated, and 50% of those children have received a booster dose. For kids 5 and older, 71% are fully vaccinated, and 48% of those kids have received a booster dose. Rates dropped for both fully vaccinated and boosters in younger children.

Vaccination is critical to helping protect those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. They include children from certain racial and ethnic minority groups and children with disabilities.

Help us protect children by doing what you can to get kids caught up on recommended vaccines.

Sincerely,



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