

For parents with questions, we have answers.

It's only natural to have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines. Let's get you the facts you need to make a decision that's right for your family.

Now that a COVID-19 vaccine is available for kids 5 and up, you may have questions about it. Here are some answers to the most asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccines available in the U.S. Talk to your doctor if you have additional questions.

How do we know the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is safe for kids?

The COVID-19 vaccines have gone through each step of the usual process required to understand the safety and effectiveness of any new vaccine. Separate studies were done in adolescents and younger children to make sure the vaccine is safe and effective in kids as well as adults. Thanks to these rigorous studies, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for people ages 5 and older. The emergency use authorization and official recommendation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that the vaccine is safe and effective in children ages 5 and older and that the benefits of the vaccine's protection outweigh the risks. Getting the vaccine helps keep children and teens safe and protected from the risks of COVID-19.

How were these vaccines created so quickly?

For over 30 years, medical experts and researchers have been studying mRNA vaccines as a way to stop other types of infections and cancers. Scientists also used their knowledge and experience about similar coronaviruses that cause diseases like Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) to help jump start their research on creating vaccines against COVID-19. This means that they were ready when COVID-19 became a pandemic. Thousands of medical experts from around the world were all working on the same problem at the same time, increasing the chance of successfully coming up with safe and effective vaccines. A lot of money was invested to solve this problem quickly to help keep people and communities safe.



I've heard COVID-19 isn't as bad in kids; why should my child get the vaccine?

There is a dangerous misconception that COVID-19 is not serious for kids. However, children are getting sick with COVID-19 – some sick enough to need care in the hospital – and they need protection. Even children who have mild COVID-19 illness miss out on school, may experience lingering symptoms (long COVID) and may be at risk for a rare but serious inflammatory condition that can affect the heart (multisystem inflammatory syndrome, or MIS-C). Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to protect people of all ages from becoming severely ill or having long-lasting health impacts due to the virus.

Getting your child the vaccine as soon as they're eligible:

- Lowers their risk of getting infected with COVID-19.
- Keeps them from getting seriously sick if they do get COVID-19.
- Keeps them from spreading COVID-19 to others, including family members who are at high risk of getting very sick or dying from the virus.

Medical and public health experts, including at the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics and Children's Hospital Colorado, recommend that all eligible children and adolescents get a COVID-19 vaccine to help protect them from contracting and spreading the virus.

Should I be worried about side effects?

Serious reactions to the vaccine are rare. Some side effects from vaccines are expected, and it means that the immune system is working. The side effects in kids are similar to side effects in adults. Most expected side effects from the COVID-19 vaccines are related to the injection site such as pain, redness and swelling. Less common side effects are fever, tiredness or swelling of the glands. These go away within several days and are not dangerous. Many people who have received both doses report stronger side effects after the second dose. Please talk to your doctor if you have questions or concerns about side effects.

Severe adverse reactions like anaphylaxis are very rare. If you believe you or your child may be experiencing a more severe reaction, contact your medical provider for advice. If you or your child experience any symptoms that indicate a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.



Should I be concerned about the reports of myocarditis after vaccination?

Getting vaccinated remains the best way to protect you and your family from COVID-19. Developing myocarditis or pericarditis (swelling of the heart or the sac around the heart) after getting a COVID-19 vaccine is rare. In fact, we know that getting infected with COVID-19 is actually more likely to cause myocarditis or pericarditis than developing these conditions after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Almost all children who have had myocarditis after vaccination have recovered quickly and fully. That said, it is important to know about the rare complications that can occur after getting a COVID vaccine. Knowing what to look for means that you can catch any adverse reactions as soon as possible. Symptoms of myocarditis and pericarditis include:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feelings of having a fast beating, fluttering or pounding heart

You should seek medical care if you think you or your child have any of these symptoms within one week after COVID-19 vaccination.

Is it safe for people to get a COVID-19 vaccine if they want to have a baby in the future?

People who are trying to become pregnant now or who want children in the future can get the COVID-19 vaccine. There is currently no evidence that any vaccine, including any COVID-19 vaccine, causes problems with fertility or trying to get pregnant.

Should pregnant people get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Pregnant people can get sick more easily because their bodies have a lowered immune response to infections. This means pregnant people are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease and may be at risk for negative effects during pregnancy if they get COVID-19. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy helps protect you from getting very sick with COVID-19.

The American Academy of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the CDC strongly recommend that pregnant patients get the COVID-19 vaccine. If you are pregnant and have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, talk to your OBGYN.

What do we know about the COVID-19 vaccines and pregnancy and breastfeeding?

There is growing amount of data about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines for people who are pregnant. Here's what we know:

- Pregnant and recently pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people.



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- The small risk of miscarriage appears to be the same for vaccinated and unvaccinated women.
- Recent data show that women who received the vaccine in pregnancy and their babies are protected from COVID-19. (Antibodies that fight COVID have been found in umbilical cord blood.)
- Studies have shown that breastfeeding people who have gotten the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer or Moderna) have antibodies in their breastmilk, which could help protect their babies. More research is needed to find out what level of protection these antibodies in breastmilk can give babies.
- Our country's strong vaccine safety monitoring systems have yet to find any safety concerns for pregnant people who got a COVID-19 vaccine or for their babies.

The scientific evidence we have shows that the benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy outweigh the risks. This is why medical experts from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and CDC recommend that pregnant or breastfeeding people get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Where can I get the vaccine?

There are many places near you that offer the COVID-19 vaccine, including stores like CVS, Walgreens, King Soopers, Safeway and Walmart. It's free to get the vaccine and you don't need an ID. Visit covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine or vaccines.gov to find a location near you.

If you don't have internet access, you can call your doctor's office for help, or text/SMS your ZIP code to the number 438-829. You can also call the pharmacy or drug store that's closest to you to ask for information on how to make an appointment.

If you need a ride to get your vaccine, Mile High United Way's Ride United program is also providing access to free rides (up to 25 miles each way) to vaccination sites across Colorado. Dial 2-1-1 or visit 211colorado.org to learn more.

Where can I find more answers to my questions?

Children's Colorado has answers to many more questions about the COVID-19 vaccines. Visit

<https://childrenscolorado.org/COVIDVaccineAnswers>



Other trusted resources:

- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/coronavirus
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: covid19.colorado.gov
- Colorado Vaccine Equity: coloradovaccineequity.org
- Immunize Colorado: immunizecolorado.org
- Vaccinate Your Family vaccinateyourfamily.org
- World Health Organization: who.int

Updated January 2022. Due to the evolving nature of the pandemic, recommendations can change quickly. Please follow all health and safety guidelines set by your local public health authorities.

