

### **Background on Approval of COVID-19 Pediatric Vaccine and Federal Recommendations**

On June 18, 2022, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Walensky endorsed the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation that all children between the ages of 6 months to 5 years be permitted to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This recommendation expands vaccine eligibility for more than 20 million additional children and means all Americans ages 6 months and older can receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

The CDC states that younger children are to receive a smaller COVID-19 dosage than other age groups. As such, for children between 6 months and 4 years of age, the CDC recommends they receive 3 doses of the Pfizer vaccine or 2 doses of the Moderna vaccine with shots administered 21 days apart. For children 5 years of age, the CDC recommends they receive either 2 doses of the Pfizer vaccine or 2 doses of the Moderna vaccine, with shots also administered 21 days apart.

In addition to receiving the vaccine, the CDC recommends all children 5 years or older receive a single COVID-19 booster shot. The booster must be administered 5 months after the child undergoes all trials necessary to obtain full vaccination status. Children who are moderately or severely immunocompromised must wait at least 3 months after the final dose in the primary series. However, the CDC announced that currently only the booster following the Pfizer vaccine is available for children ages 11 and under, as the Moderna recommendation has not been authorized yet.

It is possible that when receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, children under the age of 11 could experience minor side effects. The CDC notes that children 4 years or older are likely to experience side effects after the second dose rather than the first, but are likely to experience fewer side effects than teens or young adults. Some of such side effects include pain where the shot was administered, fever, fatigue, headaches, chills, muscle pain, and swollen lymph nodes. Common side effects for children 3 years or younger include pain where the shot was administered, swollen lymph nodes, irritability, fatigue, and loss of appetite. The CDC reported that the side effects of the booster shot mirror the side effects of the initial COVID-19 vaccine.

To help manage these side effects, the CDC notes that aspirin for those 18 years or younger is not recommended as it puts children at risk for Reye's syndrome. Instead, the CDC recommends using a cool, damp cloth on the area where the shot was given, which helps reduce discomfort. The CDC emphasizes that COVID-19 is an unpredictable virus, and children can react differently. However, the CDC stresses that vaccination minimizes the risk of hospitalization and aggressive symptoms.

### Resources

- COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens (CDC) [Link](#)
- COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations for Children and Teens (CDC) [Link](#)
- Why Children and Teens Should Get Vaccinated Against COVID-19 (CDC) [Link](#)
- COVID-19 Vaccines in Children and Adolescents (American Academy of Pediatrics) [Link](#)
- What should parents know about the COVID vaccine for kids under 5? (HealthyChildren.org) [Link](#)
- Pediatric Vaccine Resources (Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services) [Link](#)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: FDA Authorizes Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccines for Children Down to 6 Months of Age (Food and Drug Administration) [Link](#)
- COVID-19 Vaccinations Covered Without Cost-sharing for Eligible Children Aged Six Months to Five Years (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) [Link](#)
- Evaluation of mRNA-1273 Covid-19 Vaccine in Children 6 to 11 Years of Age (National Library of Medicine) [Link](#)