

COVID-19 Vaccine and Kids

Children's Memorial Hermann recognizes it can be challenging for parents and families to navigate the overwhelming amount of information available regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and kids. Below, we present frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine to help you make informed decisions to further protect the health of your children and your family.



How do we know that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective for children?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which authorized emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19 in children ages 5-11, is globally respected for its scientific standards of vaccine safety, effectiveness and quality. The FDA evaluated data from 3100 pediatric study participants to ensure that each vaccine is safe. Based on this research, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that anyone who is eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine get vaccinated as soon as possible.



If my child has food allergies, is it safe for them to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Children with food allergies can safely get the COVID-19 vaccine. Unlike the flu shot, the COVID-19 vaccine does not contain food products such as egg proteins. If your child is allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG), or has experienced a severe allergic reaction to other injectable treatments, please consult with a doctor.



In general, children have been at low risk from developing serious illness from COVID-19.

Why should they get vaccinated?

Keep in mind, low risk is not no risk. While most children with COVID-19 have mild symptoms or have no symptoms at all, severe illness and death have been reported in children under the age of 1 as well as in children with underlying health conditions. Vaccines are helpful in preventing illness and disease, and the COVID-19 vaccine is no different. Getting vaccinated protects children from developing severe complications from COVID-19 and may reduce the chance they could spread the infection to other more vulnerable family members and friends. Clinical trials in children ages 5-11 years found the vaccine to be 90.7% effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19.



My child has had COVID-19. Will my child's antibodies be enough to protect them from another infection?

While doctors do not know yet how long we are protected after having COVID-19, they do know it is possible to contract the virus again—and early research is showing that natural immunity may not be as effective as vaccines in protecting against new strains of the virus. The CDC recommends vaccination even for those who were previously infected, especially as more infectious COVID-19 variants develop.



If I have received my COVID-19 vaccine, will that be enough to protect my children from contracting the virus?

Although less likely, it is possible for vaccinated individuals to contract COVID-19 and spread it to others. This combined with more transmissible COVID-19 variants—which account for the majority of current cases in the U.S.—puts children at risk of getting sick with the virus and spreading it to others, particularly while in close contact with other children.

What side effects can my child expect after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine?

As with other vaccines, children may feel tired or have a sore arm, low-grade fever and other flu-like symptoms following COVID-19 vaccination. However, these symptoms are typically mild and go away within 48 hours.

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Does the COVID-19 vaccine have a long-term impact on fertility? How can I be sure it won't affect my child's development?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is no evidence that any vaccine, including the COVID-19 vaccine, impacts development or fertility.



There have been reports of heart inflammation in young people after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. How should this impact my decision whether to vaccinate my child?

Federal health officials—including those with the American Academy of Pediatrics—have advised that heart inflammation (myocarditis and pericarditis) is an extremely rare side effect of the COVID-19 vaccine. Importantly, for the young people who do experience this side effect, most cases are mild and individuals recover often on their own or with minimal treatment. Myocarditis and pericarditis are much more common in individuals who contract COVID-19, and the risks to the heart from COVID-19 infection can be more severe.



Can the COVID-19 vaccine be administered with other vaccines, such as the flu shot, at the same time?

Yes, according to the CDC, the COVID-19 vaccine may be given simultaneously with other vaccines. Extensive experience with non-COVID-19 vaccines has shown that the ability of a vaccine to create an immune response and potential side effects are generally similar when vaccines are administered simultaneously as when they are administered alone.



How many doses of the COVID-19 vaccine does my child need and when should they get them?

The FDA has authorized a two-dose series of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children 5 to 17 years of age. Each dose should be administered 21 days apart and eligible children are encouraged to get their first dose as soon as possible.



What is the difference between the COVID-19 vaccine for children under 12 and the vaccine authorized for children and adults ages 12 and older?

The COVID-19 vaccine dose for children ages 5 to 11 is one-third of the dose authorized for children ages 12 to 17. Other than the dose amount, there are no other differences between these vaccines, and both are highly effective.

Am I able to get my child vaccinated with Memorial Hermann?

Memorial Hermann is pleased to offer free COVID-19 vaccinations. The COVID-19 vaccine is being offered to new and established patients ages 5 and older at Children's Memorial Hermann Pediatrics locations and a number of Memorial Hermann-affiliated pediatrician practices. Parents should call their pediatrician's office to schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. If the pediatrician's office is not offering the COVID-19 vaccine, please schedule an appointment at one of our COVID-19 Vaccine Walk-In Clinics offering the Pfizer vaccine. Please note, minors (individuals 5 through 17 years of age) will be required to have an adult accompany them to their vaccination appointment. Memorial Hermann locations administering the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccine will only vaccinate individuals 18 years of age and older.

Children's Memorial Hermann believes in the safety and efficacy of all COVID-19 vaccines currently available and invites all members of our community 5 years of age and older to register for vaccination.

To learn more about children and the COVID-19 vaccine, visit [memorialhermann.org/covid-vaccine-children](https://www.memorialhermann.org/covid-vaccine-children).

