

June 20, 2022

Q&A for Parents/COVID-19 Vaccine for Children Under the Age of 5

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) met on June 17 thru June 18, 2022, to discuss the FDA recommendations on the emergency use (EUA) authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines in children between 6 months thru 5 years of age. On Saturday, June 18, 2022, the CDC posted this announcement:

"Today, CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, M.D., M.P.H., endorsed the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation that all children 6 months through 5 years of age should receive a COVID-19 vaccine."

For more information on its recommendation, please visit
<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0618-children-vaccine.html>

Q: Why should I choose to have my child vaccinated against COVID-19 if children in this age group have not been severely affected?

A: The FDA reports that while only about 3% of the COVID cases in the U.S. have been in children between the ages of 4 years and 6 months of age, the hospitalization and death rates in that age group are higher than in older children. More than half of young children hospitalized due to Covid-19 had no underlying conditions.

This protection is particularly important for children who are immunocompromised. Overall, the benefits of the vaccine outweigh any risks associated with the vaccine.

Q: There are two different vaccines approved for this age group. What is the difference between these two vaccines?

A: **Pfizer's vaccine** for this age group is given in two doses, three weeks apart, with a third dose given at least two months later. Each shot contains 3 micrograms of the vaccine, which is one-tenth of the dose given to adults. Clinical data presented to the FDA and CDC indicated that the shots are about 80% effective in preventing symptomatic COVID.

Moderna's vaccine for this age group includes 25 micrograms of the vaccine, which is one-fourth of the dosage given to adults. These shots are to be given four weeks apart. The effectiveness for the two dose regimen was approximately 40-50% effective in preventing symptomatic COVID. Moderna is continuing to test a booster dose that could be available in the fall.

Q: How do I know which one is best for my child?

A: Distribution of both vaccines has already begun and will be available at pediatric practices, pharmacies, Federally Qualified Health Centers, local health departments, clinics and other locations throughout Georgia beginning the week of June 20. If you have questions about either of these vaccines, reach out to your pediatrician or primary care provider who can help guide you in your decision. It is possible that locations may not have both options available, so be certain to ask which vaccine is being provided if it is important in your decision making process.

Q: My child is immunocompromised. Is there a difference in the dosage for my child?

A: The dosing schedule for children who are moderately or severely immunocompromised would be different than for a child who is not immunocompromised. There would be three doses of both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines,

but the timing would be further apart. Reach out to your pediatrician or primary care provider for more information.

Q: What kind of side effects have been seen in children?

A: The side effects in children have been similar to those seen in adults. The most common side effects were pain at the injection site, irritability and drowsiness. Reactions were mostly mild or moderate. There were no serious adverse events related to the vaccine.

Q: My child also needs other vaccines. Can I schedule the COVID vaccine at the same time as other vaccines?

A: Neither Moderna nor Pfizer studied how the vaccine performed when given with other vaccines, but the CDC recommended that in most cases, clinicians can give the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines. Being up to date with all vaccinations is particularly important as many kids fell behind their regular vaccination schedule during the pandemic.

Reach out to your pediatrician or primary care provider for more information. Your child's healthcare provider will be the best person to answer this question.

Q: Can my older children still get the vaccine?

A: Absolutely, the COVID-19 vaccine is available to children 5 years of age and older. Booster shots have also been approved so contact your child's healthcare provider to schedule an appointment.

Q: How do I prepare my child for the COVID vaccine?

A: The following checklist will help prepare you for your child's COVID-19 vaccine:

- Check to see if your child is up-to-date on all immunizations.
- If not, call your pediatrician to determine whether to schedule those as well.
- Contact your pediatrician with any questions or concerns you may have.
- Schedule a vaccine appointment.
- Schedule your child's next dose as soon as the first dose is completed.
- You will receive a vaccine card. Take a picture of it or make a copy and keep in a safe place.
- Do not share the card on social media.
- After all doses have been given, make sure that your child's healthcare provider has a copy if you had the vaccine at a location outside of your child's pediatrician's office.

****REMEMBER:** The Pfizer vaccine is given in three doses and the Moderna vaccine is given in two doses.

Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0618-children-vaccine.html>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/what-should-parents-know-about-the-covid-vaccine-for-kids-under-5.aspx>

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/06/18/cdc-advisers-endorse-pfizer-moderna-covid-vaccines-for-children-under-5/>