

COVID-19 Vaccines

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents, Guardians, and Youth Ages 12-17 Eligible for the Pfizer Vaccine

Q: Are there vaccines available for children or teens?

A: Yes. In the United States, one COVID-19 vaccine has been granted authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in people age 12 and older – the Pfizer vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine had one of the largest clinical trials in history, with more than 43,000 voluntary participants. The other available vaccines, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, are currently authorized for those age 18 and older.

Q: Is parental/guardian consent required?

A: Yes. Children under age 18 who are not emancipated must have parental or legal guardian consent for any vaccine. A parent or legal guardian generally should accompany the minor to receive the vaccine, unless the administration of the vaccine occurs in a physician's office, school-based or school-associated clinic setting or similar setting.

Q: Are COVID-19 vaccines safe and effective?

A: Yes, COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. According to the FDA, in Pfizer's [vaccine clinical trial](#) for youth ages 12-15, there were zero cases of COVID-19 in the 1,100 children who received the Pfizer vaccine, and 16 cases in the 1,100 children in the placebo group. The trial also found that the youth who were vaccinated had high levels of antibodies in their blood, indicating that they had developed strong protective immunity.

Q: How long does it take for the vaccine to work?

A: The Pfizer vaccine is a two-dose series. The second dose is due 21 days (three weeks) after the first dose. Both doses are needed to achieve maximum protection. A person is considered fully immunized two weeks following the second dose.

Q: What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines?

A: The most common side effects include soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site; fever and/or chills; headache; fatigue; and muscle or joint pain. These side effects are normal and a sign that your body is creating an immune response to protect you from COVID-19. Side effects typically last only a few days, and may increase with the second dose.

Q: Will COVID-19 vaccines change someone's DNA?

A: No. [COVID-19 vaccines](#) will not alter a person's DNA. The Pfizer vaccine is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. It provides instructions for the body to create the harmless surface or "spike" protein found in the virus that causes COVID-19; the body responds by building antibodies to destroy the protein.

Q: Do COVID-19 vaccines implant people with a tracking microchip?

A: No, vaccine injections do not contain tracking microchips.

Q: Do COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility, or impact a child's future fertility?

A: No. There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems.

Q: How can I make an appointment? Where can youth be vaccinated?

A: There are hundreds of locations at which youth can be vaccinated across the state, including pediatrician's offices, vaccine clinics, local health departments, hospitals, community health centers, and more. However, parents of 12-year-olds should be advised that due to current state law, children age 12 and younger must have a prescription to be vaccinated at a pharmacy; they may be vaccinated anywhere except a pharmacy. Youth ages 13 and older do not need a prescription, and may receive their COVID-19 vaccine at a pharmacy or any other vaccine provider listed at gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov. Legislation is pending to permit youth ages 7-12 to receive a COVID-19 or influenza vaccination at a pharmacy without a prescription. Prescriptions would still be required for all other vaccinations for this age group. Members of the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate have passed the bill. Once the

bill is signed by the governor, it will immediately go into effect.

Q: What should my child do before their vaccine appointment?

A: They should eat and drink plenty of water before getting a vaccination. This is especially important for children and teens because [fainting after any vaccine is more common among adolescents, and often the result of high anxiety or dehydration](#). Get plenty of rest the night before your appointment if possible. Wear a short-sleeve or sleeveless shirt to allow easy access to the upper arm. If it's a colder day, layer with a cardigan or jacket that is easy to remove quickly.

Q: What should I do if my child is feeling anxious?

A: Ask your child to breathe slowly and deeply before they receive the injection, and think about something relaxing. They should avoid looking at the syringe, and relax the arm where you will receive the injection. Parents can take [simple steps to help prepare their child for the vaccination and make the experience less stressful](#). Parents can calm their children's anxieties by reminding them to breathe deeply or distract them by talking to them while they are getting the vaccination.

Q: I've seen a lot of rumors on social media about vaccines. How can I tell what is true?

A: The internet is filled with dangerous misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines, and it can be difficult to know what to trust. The best thing you can do is educate yourself about the vaccines with information from trustworthy sources. Learn more about [finding credible vaccine information in this article from the CDC](#), and separate myths from facts [on this page from the Ohio Department of Health](#).

Have more questions about COVID-19?

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) | [Myths vs. Facts](#) | [What to know before, during, and after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine](#)
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