

# CDC Recommends Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine for Children 5 to 11 Years

## Media Statement

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Today, CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, M.D., M.P.H., endorsed the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation that children 5 to 11 years old be vaccinated against COVID-19 with the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric vaccine. CDC now expands vaccine recommendations to about 28 million children in the United States in this age group and allows providers to begin vaccinating them as soon as possible.

COVID-19 cases in [children](#) can result in hospitalizations, deaths, MIS-C (inflammatory syndromes) and long-term complications, such as "long COVID," in which symptoms can linger for months. The spread of the Delta variant resulted in a surge of COVID-19 cases in children throughout the summer. During a 6-week period in late June to mid-August, COVID-19 hospitalizations among children and adolescents [increased fivefold](#). Vaccination, along with other preventative measures, can protect children from COVID-19 using the safe and effective vaccines already recommended for use in adolescents and adults in the United States. Similar to what was seen in adult vaccine trials, vaccination was nearly 91 percent effective in preventing COVID-19 among children aged 5-11 years. In clinical trials, vaccine side effects were mild, self-limiting, and similar to those seen in adults and with other vaccines recommended for children. The most common side effect was a sore arm.

COVID-19 vaccines have undergone – and will continue to undergo – the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. Vaccinating children will help protect them from getting COVID-19 and therefore reducing their risk of severe disease, hospitalizations, or developing long-term COVID-19 complications. Getting your children vaccinated can help protect them against COVID-19, as well as reduce disruptions to in-person learning and activities by helping curb community transmission.

Distribution of pediatric vaccinations across the country started this week, with plans to scale up to full capacity starting the week of November 8th. Vaccines will be available at thousands of pediatric healthcare provider offices, pharmacies, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and more.

**The following is attributable to Dr. Walensky:**

"Together, with science leading the charge, we have taken another important step forward in our nation's fight against the virus that causes COVID-19. We know millions of parents are eager to get their children vaccinated and with this decision, we now have recommended that about 28 million children receive a COVID-19 vaccine. As a mom, I encourage parents with questions to talk to their pediatrician, school nurse or local pharmacist to learn more about the vaccine and the importance of getting their children vaccinated."

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