

Children 5-11 now eligible for reduced dose Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, parents with questions advised to discuss vaccination with their children's health care provider

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended pediatric Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children 5-11 years of age in the U.S. The COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine for this age group is a reduced dose (10 microgram), two-dose series.

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) follows the guidance of the CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) regarding vaccination recommendations. ACIP's recommendation applies to all children 5-11 years of age, including those with underlying conditions and previous COVID-19 infection. As Pfizer is shipping pre-ordered vaccine for children in this age group, ADPH is giving guidance to entities for administration of this product consistent with ACIP and CDC recommendations.

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris said, "It is expected that vaccine for this age group will be widely available next week. We believe the best way to protect everyone is to be vaccinated, including children and people who have been infected with COVID-19 previously. Parents with questions are advised to discuss vaccination for their children with their pediatrician, family physician or clinic and make the best decision based on scientific evidence and the guidance of their provider."

The CDC provides the following information:

- 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.
- COVID-19 vaccines have undergone – and will continue to undergo – the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.
- 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.
- Vaccinating children will help protect them from getting COVID-19, 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.

Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children age 5-11 is currently being shipped nationwide. Inventory information is currently being updated and will be available at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) by the end of this week. Vaccines will be available at many pediatric health care provider offices, pharmacies, Federally Qualified Health Centers, county health departments, and other locations. Contact your provider for more information.

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