

Five Vaccine Questions Parents Can Ask

The United States (US) Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 years old. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommended the vaccine in this age group. There are 28 million children in the US ages 5 to 11 years old. This age group makes up 39% of COVID-19 cases in those under the age of 18 years. While children are less likely to develop severe COVID-19 than adults, severe illness, hospitalization, and death have occurred in younger ages. Now that there is a COVID-19 vaccine option for ages 5 to 11 years, here are answers to vaccine questions that are top of mind for many parents.

1. How effective is Pfizer's vaccine in children ages 5 to 11 years?

- According to results from the ongoing study in ages 5 to 11 years, the vaccine has been **90.7% effective** in preventing COVID-19 measured 7 days after the second dose. The study has been going on with delta as the prevalent strain.
- Immune responses in this age group were comparable to 16 to 25-year-olds.

2. What are the common side effects?

- The most common side effect was injection site pain (**sore arm**). Some of the other **common side effects** include fatigue, headache, redness and swelling, fever, chills, and muscle pain.
- Side effects were generally more common after the second dose. Side effects were mostly mild to moderate, started within 2 days of the second dose, and resolved within 1 or 2 days.

- There have been **no cases of myocarditis** (heart inflammation) reported in this age group.
- The study is ongoing, and the FDA and CDC will continue to monitor for vaccine safety and look for rare or serious side effects.
- The vaccine should not be given to anyone who has a history of anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) to any part of Pfizer's vaccine.

3. How is Pfizer's vaccine dosed in ages 5 to 11 years? What type of vaccine is it?

- The dose for 5 to 11-year-olds is a **two-dose regimen of 10 mcg given 21 days apart**.
- It is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine, but the dose is one-third of the adolescent and adult doses (30 mcg).

4. Can the flu and COVID-19 shots be given at the same visit?

- COVID-19 vaccine can be given at the same visit as routine childhood immunizations, including **flu**.

5. Where is Pfizer's vaccine available?

- Pfizer's vaccine for ages 5 to 11 years is available in pediatrician offices, pharmacies, health departments, hospitals, and other sites. Vaccines.gov lists vaccine availability at different locations.

Disclaimer: The content in this blog article is NOT a substitute for professional medical advice. For questions regarding COVID-19 vaccines, any medical condition, or if you are in need of medical advice, please contact your healthcare provider. Given the fluid nature of the pandemic, information in this article is subject to change and may not be current.

Sources

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