

Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine FAQs

ages 5-11

mRNA vaccines were developed so fast—how is that possible?

The COVID-19 vaccines were able to be safely developed so quickly because:

1. The technology was ready. mRNA vaccine technology has been in the works since 1990. We just haven't had the best use for it until now.
2. Global interest. Infectious disease outbreaks are often localized to one area so there is usually not as much global interest in creating a vaccine. This time, the whole world was impacted.
3. Funding was available. Money is normally the biggest hurdle for developing vaccines. Because the entire world was impacted, lots of funding was available to make things happen quickly.
4. Easier process. mRNA vaccines only require you to identify the DNA or RNA sequence of the virus, not grow or recreate the whole virus. That leads to a quicker production.

how do we know they are safe?

Kids are not just little adults, so Pfizer tested varying doses of the vaccine in trials of children ages 5-11. They found that kids have a strong immune response even to lower doses. This trial used a 10-microgram dose. Those 12 years and older received a 30-microgram dose. The trial included:

- 2,268 participants ages 5 to 11
- Two-doses of the vaccine given 21 days apart

Beyond clinical trials, billions of adults and teenagers have received the vaccine with very few, mostly mild side effects. Parents can feel comfortable that this vaccine has shown to be safe.

what about side effects?

Most of side effects are actually proof that your immune system is working! Doctors call it a “strong immune response.”

According to Dr. Robert Frenck, who ran a clinical trial of the Pfizer vaccine in the 5-11 age group at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, the side effects in children mirrored exactly those of adults, lasting a day or two. The most common side effects were pain at injection site, headache and fatigue. Less common side effects in children were fevers and chills.

I've heard there are some side effects that affect the heart.

There have been reports of a rare heart inflammation called myocarditis with the second dose of both Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, mostly in teenage boys. The cases were mild, treated with ibuprofen and children recovered.

The likelihood is a few per 100,000. That's about a 99.999% chance that this **won't** happen.

(continued on reverse)



what are some other illnesses we have vaccines for?

Vaccines are really a wonder of the modern world. They keep us safe from so many illnesses that once devastated communities and killed thousands of people. Just a few include:

- Polio
- Tetanus
- Flu
- Hepatitis A and B
- Rubella (German measles)
- Measles
- Whooping cough
- Hib
- Rotavirus
- HPV
- Pneumonia
- Mumps
- Chickenpox
- Diphtheria
- Meningitis

kids get so many vaccines already. why give them one more?

Your child's body is truly a miraculous thing. We would not give children vaccines if we didn't know they could handle it. Decades of research and real-world evidence show vaccines are effective, and much safer than getting the actual illness. That is why the early childhood vaccination schedule looks like it does. Children's immune systems are ready to learn how to fight new viruses. Vaccines give their bodies the tools needed to keep them safe without having to get sick.

why get my child vaccinated when there are still breakthrough cases?

The vaccine was never intended to totally keep people from getting sick, although you are five times less likely to get COVID-19 if you are vaccinated. The primary role of the vaccine is to keep you from developing serious symptoms that put you in the hospital. Infections can occur in vaccinated people, but they are not very common. Most have had mild, if any, symptoms.

COVID-19 doesn't really impact children, right?

That's not so true anymore. When COVID-19 first started, children didn't really get sick. The delta variant changed that. Now children are getting sick at a much higher rate and their symptoms can become much more serious. Some children develop symptoms for many months, called 'long COVID.'

Many children also suffered from an illness called MIS-C after having a COVID-19 infection. MIS-C stands for multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. It can be a very serious illness that impacts their entire body. In fact, in the Dayton region we have had a higher rate of MIS-C in children than in many places across the country. No one is quite sure why yet, but it's another reason that our community's kids need to be protected against COVID-19.

isn't it just like the flu or chickenpox? why not just let them get sick and get natural immunity?

It's too risky. We can't predict who will have a mild case and who will get really sick, or even die. We do not want to risk the death of any child, especially when we have a way to protect them safely and effectively.

Remember, we have vaccines for the flu and chickenpox, too.

can my child get the flu shot and the COVID vaccine together?

Yes. You can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines, including a flu vaccine, at the same visit. Experience with other vaccines has shown that the immune response and possible side effects after getting vaccinated are generally the same when given alone or with other vaccines.

what about future fertility concerns?

There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems. The myth started because a protein in the placenta looks a bit like a part of the coronavirus called a spike. However, it would be like you mistaking an elephant for an alley cat because they are both gray. They are so completely different, your immune system wouldn't confuse them.

where can I look if I have more questions or want more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is constantly updating the information on their website about COVID-19 and the different approved vaccines at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19.