

COVID-19 Vaccines for Kids: Answering common questions

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Why do children need to be immunized?

- Although COVID-19 in children is usually milder than in adults, some children can get very sick and have complications or long-lasting symptoms that affect their health and well-being.
- Children can transmit the virus to others, even if they have no symptoms.
- COVID-19 vaccines help keep vulnerable family and community members protected.

COVID-19 can be severe in children

It's not the flu: COVID-19 is currently in the top 10 causes of death for children [1].

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe for children?

- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been shown to be safe and 100% effective at preventing COVID-19 in children ages 12-15 and 90.7% effective in children ages 5-11 [1, 2].
- The vaccine was well tolerated in both age groups.

Are there long-term effects caused by COVID-19 vaccines in children?

- Side effects from vaccines in general occur within 6 weeks.
- There have been no reported long term effects after COVID-19 vaccination. Clinical trials will continue to monitor the long-term safety of COVID-19 vaccines in children [1].

What are the side effects to expect in kids?

- Pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, chills, joint and muscle pain and fever are the most common reported side effects.
- Severe adverse effects are very rare and do not suggest any serious safety concerns.

What about myocarditis?

- Among those receiving an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, the highest rate of myocarditis is in adolescents age 16-17 [3].
- However, patients with vaccine-related myocarditis return to normal cardiac function very quickly [4].

Can a child get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

- No. mRNA vaccines carry a recipe on how to make the spike protein which is used by the immune system to build immunity.
- The vaccine only has a recipe for the spike protein and not the rest of the virus. The spike protein on its own cannot cause infection. Once the recipe is used, the recipe and the spike protein are degraded.

Overall, benefits outweigh risks for vaccination in children.

References

1. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee October 26, 2021 Meeting Document. Available at: <https://www.fda.gov/media/153409/download>. Accessed October 27, 2021.
2. Pfizer. Pfizer-BioNTech Announces Positive Topline Results of Pivotal COVID-19 Vaccine Study in Adolescents. (2021, March 31). Available at: <https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/pfizer-biontech-announce-positive-topline-results-pivotal>. Accessed November 28, 2021.
3. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee Meeting. mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine-Associated Myocarditis. Available at: <https://www.fda.gov/media/153514/download>. Accessed November 22, 2021.
4. Patel, T. et al. Comparison of MIS-C Related Myocarditis, Classic Viral Myocarditis, and COVID-19 Vaccine related Myocarditis in Children. medRxiv 2021.