



Vaccinations are always free. Neither you nor your child will be asked about immigration status. Visit: [VaccinateLACounty.com](https://vaccinate.lacounty.gov) or [VacunateLosAngeles.com](https://vacunate.lacounty.gov) (Spanish) to find a vaccination location.

### Why should my child get vaccinated against COVID-19?

Vaccinating your child is the best way to protect them from COVID-19. It also protects against long-term health problems caused by COVID-19.

Even though COVID-19 is often mild in children, they can become very sick. So far, COVID-19 has caused or contributed to the [deaths](#) of over 1,900 children. Some children with initial mild illness get Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) a few weeks later. This is a condition where different parts of the body can become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs.

As with adults, there are also children who get infected and suffer from post-COVID-19 conditions or “long COVID” even if their COVID infection was mild. Children with long COVID may feel tired, get headaches, and have trouble focusing. This can last for weeks to months after getting COVID-19. Several studies have shown that “long COVID” is more common in unvaccinated children.

Even healthy children with no medical conditions can be hospitalized or have long-term complications that can affect their mental and physical health and quality of life. Staying [up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccines, including boosters reduces the risk of getting these complications.

### WHICH VACCINE TO GET AND WHEN

#### Which COVID-19 vaccine(s) can my child receive?

COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for children ages 6 months of age and older. Your child can receive any of the COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized or approved for their age group:

- Children ages 6 months and older can get a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.
- Children ages 12 and older can get a Novavax vaccine.

The dose of vaccine is based on the age of the child on the day they get their vaccine, not on their size or weight. It is the dose that is needed to create the right immune response. Children ages 12 and over get the same dose of vaccine as teens and adults.

The number of doses and the time between doses depends on which vaccine your child received, their age, and whether or not they are [immunocompromised](#).

See [ph.lacounty.gov/covidvaccineschedules](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidvaccineschedules) for details on vaccine recommendations for children. See the FDA Fact Sheets for Recipients and Caregivers for [Pfizer](#), [Moderna](#), or [Novavax](#) for information about each vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you have questions.



### The schedule says the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of vaccine should be given up to 8 weeks after the first dose. How do I decide when my child should get their second dose of vaccine?

The recommended timing for your child's 2<sup>nd</sup> primary dose of COVID-19 vaccine depends on your child's individual situation.

- *Three weeks* (Pfizer and Novavax) or *4 weeks* (Moderna) after the 1<sup>st</sup> dose is recommended for children who are moderately or severely immunocompromised. It is also recommended when the fullest possible protection is needed sooner; for example, when there is a high level of spread in the community or an individual is at higher risk for severe disease.
- *Eight weeks* after the 1<sup>st</sup> dose may be best for some children, especially male adolescents and young adult males (ages 12-39). This is because having a longer time between first and second doses may improve the effectiveness of the vaccines. Plus, it may lower the already rare risks of myocarditis and pericarditis (heart conditions).

### What is the difference between the original (monovalent) COVID-19 vaccines and the updated (bivalent) vaccines?

Monovalent vaccines target the original virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccines were updated to make bivalent vaccines that target both the original COVID-19 virus and the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron variants.

- *Primary series doses* - Monovalent vaccines are used as the primary series for all vaccines with one exception. A bivalent vaccine is used for dose 3 of a primary series of Pfizer vaccine for children ages 6 months–4 years.
- *Booster doses* - All Pfizer and Moderna booster doses are bivalent (updated) vaccines. The Novavax booster dose is a monovalent vaccine.

### Should my child get a booster dose?

**Yes. The updated (bivalent) boosters are recommended for everyone ages 6 months and older with one exception.** Children 6 months through 4 years of age who finished a Pfizer vaccine primary series are not eligible for a booster dose at this time.

The updated boosters can help restore protection against COVID-19 that has decreased over time and provide broader protection against newer variants. The original (monovalent) Pfizer and Moderna boosters are no longer available.

One updated booster is recommended at least 2 months after your child's last COVID-19 vaccine dose (either the final primary series dose or the last original [monovalent] booster). This is regardless of how many original (monovalent) were received in the past. Children ages 11 and under get a lower dose of the updated booster than teens and adults.

*Ages 5 and older*

- Children age 5 who completed a Moderna primary series can get either a Pfizer or Moderna updated booster.
- Children age 5 who completed a primary series of Pfizer vaccine get the Pfizer updated booster.
- Everyone ages 6 and older can get either a Pfizer or Moderna updated booster.



# COVID-19 Vaccines for Children 6 Months and Older

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

*Ages 6 months through 4 years*

- Children who completed a primary series of Moderna vaccine can get the Moderna updated booster.
- Children who completed a primary series of Pfizer vaccines are not eligible for a booster dose at this time. Note: the Pfizer primary series for this age group now includes a bivalent (updated) vaccine for the 3rd dose.

Visit the CDC interactive [Find Out When to Get A Booster](#) tool to help determine if your child can get one or more COVID-19 boosters. Talk to your doctor if you have questions.

### Should my child get vaccinated if they already had COVID-19?

Yes. Your child should stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines even if they already had COVID-19. This is because vaccines provide added protection.

Getting infected with COVID-19 offers some protection from future illness with COVID-19, sometimes called “natural immunity.” But the level of protection someone gets from infection varies. It depends on how mild or severe their illness was, the amount of time that has passed since they had COVID-19, and their age. There is currently no test that can reliably tell if a person is protected from getting COVID-19. A [study](#) published in July 2022 showed that when people who had been infected with COVID-19 in the past were then vaccinated, they developed a strong immune response and had much better protection against COVID-19 infection than people who did not get vaccinated.

If your child recently had COVID-19, you may consider waiting for 3 months after your child first got COVID-19 for them to start or continue a COVID-19 vaccine series or get a booster. This is because they are unlikely to get COVID-19 again within the first 3 months after infection. A longer time between infection and getting a vaccine may also result in a better immune response. However, you should not put the dose off for more than 3 months and it is safe to receive the vaccine earlier. If your child currently has COVID-19, you should wait until at least after their isolation period is over to get vaccinated. This is so that they don't infect healthcare workers and others when they go to get their vaccine.

If your child had Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), talk with their doctor about when COVID-19 vaccination is recommended.

## SAFETY OF COVID-19 VACCINATION

### Is it safe for children to get the vaccine?

Yes, it is safe for children to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Before recommending COVID-19 vaccination for children, clinical trials with thousands of children were done to test vaccine safety and effectiveness for this age group.

To date, [tens of millions of children and teens](#) ages 5 through 17 years, and over one million children ages 4 years and younger, have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Ongoing safety monitoring shows that COVID-19 vaccination continues to be safe for children and teens.



Side effects tend to be mild and temporary. [Serious reactions](#) after COVID-19 vaccination in children are rare and typically occur within a few days after getting a vaccine.

### *Myocarditis and pericarditis*

Rare cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart) have been reported after getting a Pfizer, Moderna, or Novavax COVID-19 vaccine. Most of the cases are among males between the ages of 12 and 39 years after their second dose of vaccine. The risk of getting these rare conditions may be decreased by waiting longer (8 weeks) to get the second dose in the primary vaccine series.

A [report](#) in September 2022 from the CDC found no increased risk for myocarditis after COVID-19 vaccination in children ages 6 months–5 years.

A [study](#) of people aged 5 and over found that the risk of heart complications, such as myocarditis, was higher after having COVID-19 than after getting a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. This was seen in males and females. It is also important to note that myocarditis after getting a COVID-19 vaccine is milder and does not last as long as myocarditis due to other causes. Most people with myocarditis or pericarditis after vaccination improved with medicine and rest.

Seek medical help right away if your child has chest pain, shortness of breath, feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart.

Learn more on the CDC webpage [Myocarditis and Pericarditis Following mRNA COVID-19 Vaccination](#).

### *Anaphylaxis*

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can happen after any vaccination. Other, less-severe allergic reactions can also happen. Call 911 if you think your child might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site. Learn more on the CDC webpage [Allergic Reactions after COVID-19 Vaccination](#).

**The CDC recommends [COVID-19 vaccination](#) for everyone 6 months of age and older. The known risks of COVID-19 illness, including hospitalization, long-term health problems, and death, outweigh the potential risks of having a rare adverse reaction to the vaccine.**

## What are the vaccine side effects for children?

Side effects after COVID-19 vaccine in children are similar to those seen in adults. Side effects in younger children are like those experienced after routine vaccines and are more common after the second dose. Side effects from the booster dose tend to be similar or less than side effects after the primary series doses.

Common side effects can include pain, swelling, and redness in the arm or thigh where the vaccine was given, muscle or joint pain, swollen lymph nodes, fever, chills, headache, irritability or crying, feeling tired, sleepiness, and loss of appetite.

These side effects may limit some daily activities but should go away in a couple of days. Not everyone will get them. Side effects are normal and a sign that the body is building immunity.



### Can my child get COVID-19 from a COVID-19 vaccine?

No. Your child cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. It is not possible. None of the vaccines that are used in the US contain any form of the virus that causes COVID-19.

### Is it safe for my child to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and other diseases at the same time?

Yes. Children ages 6 months and over can get a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other routine childhood vaccines, such as polio, flu, MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella), and Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis/whooping cough). If your child gets a COVID-19 vaccine at a place that doesn't offer other vaccines that they may need, you can go to a different location to get them at any time. There is no need to wait between vaccines.

### Can children with allergies get a COVID-19 vaccine?

It depends on what the child is allergic to.

- Children who are allergic to things like oral medication, food (including eggs), latex, pets, or pollen, or who have a family history of allergies can get vaccinated. The vaccines do not contain food proteins (like egg or nut products), gelatin, latex, antibiotics, metals, or preservatives (like thimerosal or mercury). Learn more about what ingredients are and are not in each COVID-19 vaccine [here](#).
- Talk to your doctor if your child had an allergic reaction to any vaccine or injectable therapy (even if it was not severe). The doctor will help decide if it is safe for them to get vaccinated.
- People who are allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG) should not get the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. People who are allergic to polysorbate should not get the Novavax vaccine.

Information about allergies may change. To see the latest guidance, see the CDC webpages [Getting Your COVID-19 Vaccine](#) and [Allergic Reactions after COVID-19 Vaccination](#) and talk to a doctor.

### Does the vaccine cause infertility?

No, the vaccine does not cause infertility. There is no evidence that any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines, can cause female or male fertility problems. Plus, there is no evidence that vaccine ingredients, including mRNA, or antibodies made following COVID-19 vaccination, would cause any problems with a person becoming pregnant (either now or in the future). Studies have shown no differences in pregnancy rates in vaccinated and unvaccinated women and men. The vaccines do not change a person's DNA. There is also no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines affect puberty or teen development. For more information, see the CDC webpage [COVID-19 Vaccines for People Who Would Like to Have a Baby](#).

### Can the COVID-19 vaccine affect my child's period?

Some people have reported a change in their period after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Two recent [studies](#) found that the time between periods increased by, on average, less than a day in each cycle that the person received a vaccine. There was no change in the number of days of bleeding. These changes were temporary.



It is important to remember that many things can cause a change to menstrual cycles. These include stress, changes in sleep, diet, exercise, and some medicines. Irregular periods are very common in teens and may have no specific cause at all. If your child has concerns about their period, it is recommended that they talk to their doctor.

### Will the COVID-19 vaccine have any long-term side effects on my child?

No. Billions of people have received COVID-19 vaccines and no unexpected long-term effects have been noted. Based on what we know from other vaccines, any rare side effects usually begin within six weeks of getting a vaccine. For this reason, the FDA required each COVID-19 vaccine to be studied for at least eight weeks after the final dose before they authorized them for use. Plus, the CDC continues to monitor COVID-19 vaccines after they are authorized.

In contrast, we do know that the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause several long-term effects in children. For example, some people continue to have symptoms such as feeling very tired, having difficulty sleeping, headaches, and shortness of breath for months after their initial COVID-19 infection, often referred to as [long COVID](#). Further, a severe condition called [Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome](#) (MIS-C) can affect children. It is a rare but serious condition associated with COVID-19 in which different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. Many of these patients need to be hospitalized and, tragically, some die. COVID-19 vaccination offers some protection against these “long term” effects of the virus. You can learn more by visiting the CDC webpage [Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines](#).

### If my child gets an adverse reaction (possible side effect) after they are vaccinated, how can I report it?

If your child has an adverse reaction after being vaccinated, talk to your doctor and report the reaction to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (or VAERS). Report it even if you aren't sure that the vaccine caused it. VAERS is an early warning system that the FDA and CDC use to find possible safety problems with any vaccine. To make a report, call 1-800-822-7967 or visit <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>.

If you have a smartphone, you can help the CDC monitor the vaccines by signing up your child for [v-safe](#). **V-safe** is a smartphone-based tool that sends text messages to check in on your child after they have been vaccinated. Each child should be signed up separately. All v-safe text messages are sent to the parent or guardian's smartphone.

Do not use VAERS and v-safe for medical advice. Call your doctor or seek medical help if your child has symptoms or health problems that worry you after getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

## GETTING CHILDREN VACCINATED

### Where can I get my child vaccinated?

Vaccines are available at hundreds of locations throughout LA County. Locations include pediatricians' offices, clinics, pharmacies, schools, special COVID-19 vaccination sites, and pop-up sites. You do not need an appointment at many locations.

In-home vaccination is also available for people who are homebound.



# COVID-19 Vaccines for Children 6 Months and Older

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

To learn more, visit [ph.lacounty.gov/howtogetvaccinated](https://ph.lacounty.gov/howtogetvaccinated). You can also call the Vaccine Call Center at 1-833-540-0473. It is open daily from 8am to 8:30pm and can arrange for free transportation to a vaccination site and in-home vaccination. Be sure to pick a location that offers the vaccine that is appropriate for the age of your child. Note that many pharmacies cannot vaccinate children under the age of 3.

### Are COVID-19 vaccines free?

Yes, COVID-19 vaccines are free for everyone 6 months and older. COVID-19 vaccines continue to be given to all eligible people living in the United States, regardless of insurance or immigration status. A vaccination site may ask to see your health insurance card, but it is not required for your child to receive a vaccine.

### How can I get a digital vaccination record for my child?

If your child was vaccinated in California, they will get a white vaccine record card. You can also request a digital COVID-19 Vaccination Record at [myvaccinerecord.cdph.ca.gov](https://myvaccinerecord.cdph.ca.gov). This is an official record. It can be downloaded to Google Pay on an Android phone or the Apple Health app on an iPhone. You can get a record for each person in your family even if you used the same email address or mobile phone number when they got vaccinated. For more information, visit the [Vaccination Records](#) webpage.

### Do I need to provide consent for my child to be vaccinated?

Youth under 18 need consent from a parent/guardian or caregiver to get vaccinated. If you cannot be present, you may be allowed to give consent by phone, video, or in writing. Check the consent requirements of the place where you plan to go. If it is a location run by Public Health, you can see the requirements and download a consent form at [ph.lacounty.gov/howtogetvaccinated](https://ph.lacounty.gov/howtogetvaccinated). Click on [Preparing for Your Visit](#) or call the Vaccine Call Center at 1-833-540-0473 (8am-8:30pm daily).

Some exceptions apply. Minors ages 15 years or older who are self-sufficient (e.g., emancipated or self-sufficient minor, married, or previously married) can give their own consent. If you are a foster caregiver, relative caregiver, or Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) staff you can provide consent as long as the foster child agrees. If you are a foster caregiver and you do not give consent but your foster child wants to get a vaccine, they can contact their legal counsel.

### What documents do I need to bring to get my child vaccinated?

Photo ID may be required at some vaccination locations. If you are a guardian of a child in foster care and your foster child does not have a photo ID, have them contact their legal counsel. Another option is to go to a location run by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, which does not require photo ID.

See above for information about consent. Check the requirements of the place you plan to go. They may be found on their webpage or in an appointment confirmation email or text. For information about the requirements at LA County Department of Public Health vaccine sites, visit [ph.lacounty.gov/howtogetvaccinated](https://ph.lacounty.gov/howtogetvaccinated). Click on [‘Preparing for Your Visit’](#) or call the Vaccine Call Center at 1-833-540-0473 (8am-8:30pm daily).





### How do I talk to my child about the COVID-19 vaccine?

It's important for young people to know the facts about the COVID-19 vaccine. There is a lot of misinformation on COVID-19 and the vaccines on the internet and social media. Be sure to talk to your kids about COVID-19 and answer any questions they may have.

Let them know about the health risks if someone gets COVID-19 and how the vaccine can help protect them. Explain that the vaccine is safe and that it does not have the virus. Go over the side effects with them and let them know that side effects are normal.

Comfort them if they are nervous about getting a vaccine. Be honest and calm. Take time to explain what to expect. In simple terms, let your child know that they may feel a little pinch and it will go away very fast. Use words like "pressure" or "poke" instead of "pain" or "shot." Even if your child can't understand your words, your calm voice will be reassuring. Remain upbeat and relaxed before, during, and especially after shots.

If your child is afraid of needles, see the CDC webpage [Needle Fears and Phobia – Find Ways to Manage](#).

Use the DPH resource [Your Child's COVID-19 Vaccine Booklet](#) which is designed to help parents and caregivers prepare for and record their children's COVID-19 vaccination.

### What can I do to prepare for my child's COVID-19 vaccination visit?

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is likely to be a very similar to getting routine vaccines. The tips below can help make things easier for you and your child when they get a COVID-19 vaccine.

#### *Before your visit*

- **Find the right vaccine location for your child**
  - **Check that the vaccination location is able to provide vaccines for your child's age group.** Note that many pharmacies are unable to vaccinate children under the age of 3.
  - **Check consent and documentation requirements.** They may be found on their webpage or in an appointment confirmation email or text. For information about the requirements at LA County Department of Public Health vaccine sites, visit [ph.lacounty.gov/vaccineappointment](https://ph.lacounty.gov/vaccineappointment). Click on 'Preparing for your visit'
- **Let staff know if your child needs accommodations when you make the appointment** (or when you arrive at the site if it is a location where appointments are not needed). Service animals are allowed, by law, to accompany children at COVID-19 vaccination sites. If you need information about [paratransit services](#), free transportation to a vaccination location or [in-home vaccination](#), visit [ph.lacounty.gov/howtogetvaccinated](https://ph.lacounty.gov/howtogetvaccinated). You can also call the DPH Vaccine Call Center 1-833-540-0473 open daily 8am to 8:30pm. More information is available on the CDC webpage [COVID-19 Vaccination for Children and Teens with Disabilities](#).
- **Read the information about the vaccine** that was in your appointment confirmation. Write down any questions you may have.
- **Learn about possible side effects and how to manage them at the Public Health [COVID-19 Vaccine Side Effects](#) webpage.**





- **Talk to your child about what to expect.** See [How do I talk to my child about the COVID-19 vaccine](#) above.

### *On the day of your child's visit*

- **Do not give your child over the counter medicine before getting the vaccine** (such as pain relievers or antihistamines) to help prevent side effects unless your child regularly takes these medicines for other reasons.
- **Take your child's COVID-19 vaccination record** if they have been vaccinated before.
- **Bring something that your child finds comforting**, like a favorite toy, blanket, or book.
- **Pack face masks.** Everyone including the staff, you, and your child (if age 2 or older) must wear a mask at the vaccination site.
- **Pack a snack and water.** On warm days, if you are visiting an outdoor location, wear a hat and lightweight clothing.
- **Get tips on how to support your child before, during, and after vaccination**
  - Tips to support children of all ages with routine vaccinations are available on the CDC webpage [Before, During, and After Shots](#).
  - Information for babies is on the CDC webpage [Make shots less stressful](#) for babies. These include distraction techniques, breastfeeding, or asking the doctor to use an oral sugar solution, and pain-relieving ointment or cooling spray.
  - Information about how to manage needle fears are on the CDC webpage [Needle Fears and Phobia](#).

### *While at your visit*

- **Tell the vaccine provider about any allergies** your child may have.
- **Ask your child to sit or lie down during vaccination.** They should continue to sit or lie down for 15 minutes after the vaccine is given. This helps to prevent fainting and injuries related to fainting. See the CDC webpage for tips on [How to Hold Your Child During Vaccination](#). This will help reduce the child's stress and may also make it easier for healthcare professionals to give the vaccine.
- **Ask your child's healthcare provider for advice on using a non-aspirin pain reliever.** Ask about any other steps you can take at home to comfort your child.
- **Make sure your child receives their COVID-19 Vaccination Record card.** See the Public Health [Vaccination Records](#) webpage for information about the card and digital records.
- **Make sure you know when your child's next dose is due.** You may wish to talk to your provider about the best time to get the second dose.
- **Sign up for V-safe.** V-safe provides quick and confidential health check-ins via text messages and/or web surveys. You can quickly and easily share information with CDC how your child feels after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Learn more at the [V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker](#) website and sign up at [vsafe.cdc.gov](https://vsafe.cdc.gov).

Use the DPH resource [Your Child's COVID-19 Vaccine Booklet](#) which is designed to help parents and caregivers prepare for and record their children's COVID-19 vaccination.