

COVID-19 Vaccine for Adolescents 12-17 Years Old

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) all recommend COVID-19 vaccination of adolescents ages 12 years and older. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted emergency use authorization (EUA) for Pfizer-BioNTech's 2-dose mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for ages 12 – 17.

The information presented in this handout is meant to help parents and guardians make an informed decision about COVID-19 vaccination for adolescents.

COVID-19 illness in Adolescents

- While most adolescents who contract COVID-19 have mild symptoms or have no symptoms, some become severely ill from COVID-19 infection. They may require hospitalization, intensive care, or a ventilator to help them breathe.
 - North Dakota's hospitalization rate of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 is 3.38 per 1,000 cases.
 - As of January 9th, 2022, North Dakota has reported 42 hospitalizations and 12,434 total positive COVID-19 cases in the 12-17 age group.
 - As of **January 8th**, 2022, the United States has reported a hospitalization rate of **96.9** per 100,000 cases in the 12-17 age group.
- COVID-19 infection has also been linked to a rare but serious health condition called multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C). Children who develop MIS-C experience inflammation in different body parts, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. These children may face ongoing health issues due to heart or other organ damage as a result of COVID-19 infection.
 - As of January 11th, 2022, there have been 2 cases of MIS-C reported in among adolescents ages 12-17 in North Dakota.
There have been over 6,000 cases of MIS-C recorded in the United States. MIS-C is most frequent among children.
- In rare cases, children who contract COVID-19 may die. Children with underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or obesity are at increased risk.
 - North Dakota has reported 2 deaths in the 12-17 age group.
 - As of January 13, 2022, there have been over 1,000 deaths involving COVID-19 for people ages 0 – 17 have been reported in the United States.

- A January 6th, 2022 [Joint Status Report](#) by the AAP and Children’s Hospital Association, reported that children make up 17.4% of all positive COVID-19 cases in the United States.
 - In North Dakota, 22.4% of adolescents 12 to 17 years old have tested positive for COVID-19.
 - 79.3% of confirmed cases in adolescents 12 to 17 years old were symptomatic. Of those symptomatic cases, the most common symptoms reported as fever (13.4%), chills (19.1%), and myalgia (24.7%).
- There is a lack of data available regarding the long-term impact COVID-19 infection has on children. However, emerging research tells us that some children who contract COVID-19 suffer long-lasting symptoms.
 - A [study](#) from the United Kingdom found that children can have prolonged symptoms of COVID-19, including fatigue, headache, muscle/joint pain, rashes, heart palpitations and mental health issues such as lack of concentration and short-term memory problems. A survey of the parents of 510 children with persistent COVID-19 symptoms revealed that their children experienced ongoing COVID-19 symptoms for an average of 8.2 months. Only 10% of the children included in the study returned to previous levels of physical activity.
 - Another [article](#) from Italy found that more than 50% of pediatric patients previously diagnosed with COVID-19 reported at least one symptom 120 days after having COVID-19, and 42.6% reported being impaired by these symptoms during daily activities.

Reasons to vaccinate adolescents

- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and provide protection from COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death. Vaccines are the single best way to protect adolescents from serious illness or even death due to COVID-19 disease.
 - *From September 1, 2021 through January 6, 2022, North Dakota has had 14 hospitalizations among our 5-11 year old population. None were fully vaccinated.*
- Adolescents who are fully vaccinated or up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines and who are presenting no symptoms do not need to quarantine following exposure to COVID-19, as their risk of infection is low – meaning they can attend school and stay in activities.
- Vaccinating everyone helps us reach community immunity so we can continue to enjoy the activities that we love. It is important for adolescent development that they can return to the routines and activities that support learning and growth.

- Most adolescents have a grandparent or other person in their lives who are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Vaccination of adolescents will prevent them from passing COVID-19 to loved ones and other vulnerable people in the community.
- Teenagers play a major role in community spread. Teenagers congregate with one another in school, engage in athletic and social activities with peers, participate in religious services, and have after-school employment or volunteer work that brings them into contact with other community members.
- Vaccinating adolescents ages 12-17 can also help protect family members, including siblings under 5 years of age who are not yet eligible for vaccination.

COVID-19 vaccines

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

COVID-19 vaccines work similarly to other vaccines. The vaccine stops the virus by helping the immune system make special proteins, called antibodies, to fight the virus. COVID-19 vaccines are not live virus vaccines and do not alter human DNA.

Are there side effects of COVID-19 vaccines?

Some people have mild or moderate side effects after getting vaccinated. The most common side effects reported after COVID-19 vaccination include pain, swelling, or redness where the shot was given, mild fever, headache, muscle pain and joint aches. Side effects are more common after the second dose for vaccines in the 2-dose series. Side effects indicate that the immune system is working and building antibodies to fight the virus.

In rare cases, some young people have experienced myocarditis/pericarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) following COVID-19 mRNA (Pfizer, Moderna) vaccination. These occur most often in males and are typically mild and not life-threatening. Myocarditis is being reported at a [rate](#) of 9.1 cases amongst females and 66.7 cases per one million doses administered amongst males after second dose mRNA vaccination in those between the ages of 12 and 17 years old. Myocarditis has also been [reported](#) after COVID-19 infection. Rates of myocarditis after a third dose is likely lower than what is seen after second doses.

Can my child receive the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines?

Yes. COVID-19 and other vaccines can be administered at the same time. It is recommended that adolescents receive [other important vaccines](#), including those that protect against

whooping cough, tetanus, diphtheria, cancer-causing human papillomavirus (HPV) and meningitis. Certain vaccines are required for Kindergarten, 7th, 11th, and 12th grades as well as entry to college. Schedule an appointment TODAY for COVID-19 and adolescent vaccines. This is especially important if your child fell behind on immunizations during the pandemic.

More than 40.3% of North Dakota adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 have already received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine!

If my 11-year-old is turning 12 during their vaccine series, which vaccine and dosage should they receive?

The CDC recommends that children should receive the age-appropriate vaccine formulation regardless of their size or weight. Children's vaccine dosages should be based on the child's age on the day of vaccinations.

- For example, if your child turns 12 years of age in between their first and second dose, they may receive the 10mcg Pediatric (5-11) Pfizer vaccine for their first dose and the 30mcg Adolescent and Adult (12+) Pfizer vaccine for their second dose.

Are immunocompromised adolescents 12 years and older eligible for an additional primary dose (3rd dose) of COVID-19 vaccine?

People ages 12 years and older who completed their Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine primary series, should also plan to get an additional primary dose 28 days after receiving their second shot. This includes people who have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

People should talk to their healthcare provider about their medical condition, and whether getting an additional primary dose is appropriate for them.

Are adolescents eligible for a COVID-19 booster dose?

Adolescents ages 12-17 years old are eligible for a single booster dose of Pfizer's mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for ages 12+ at least 5 months after the completion of their primary series. Additionally, immunocompromised adolescents ages 12-17 years old who have received an additional (3rd) dose of COVID-19 vaccine, are eligible for a single booster dose of Pfizer's mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for ages 12+ at least 5 months after their additional dose.

Currently only individuals ages 12 and older are eligible for COVID-19 boosters. Younger individuals may be recommended to receive a booster dose in the future. The North Dakota Department of Health will communicate those recommendations if that time comes.

Some highlights from Pfizer's phase 3 adolescent COVID-19 vaccine trial:

- The trial included 2,260 children ages 12-15 years old in the U.S., about half of whom received the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.
- There were 18 cases of COVID-19 in the placebo (unvaccinated) group and none in the vaccinated group (100% efficacy).
- No hospitalizations due to COVID-19 or cases of MIS-C were reported by any trial participant.
- There were no severe adverse events in adolescents who received the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine during phase 3 clinical trials.
- Fewer side effects were seen in the 12-15 age group than the 16 – 25 year age group.
 - Fevers were observed more frequently in the vaccinated 12- to 15-year-olds, about 20%, compared to 17% in the 16- to 25-year-olds.

Who recommends COVID-19 vaccine for adolescents?

- More than 60 pediatricians and other healthcare providers in North Dakota signed a [letter](#) supporting the vaccination of children. Talk to your child's healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns. Many North Dakota pediatric and family medicine providers are offering vaccination in their clinics.
- The [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\) recommends COVID-19 vaccination for all children and adolescents 12 years of age and older who do not have contraindications to using a COVID-19 vaccine authorized for use for their age.](#)
- [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) recommends all individuals over the age of 12 to receive COVID-19 vaccine.

Where to Get Vaccinated

Information on COVID-19 vaccine providers and clinics near you can be found on the NDDoH [COVID Vaccine Locator](#) page. You can also contact the NDDoH Hotline at 1.866.207.2880 for assistance.

Vaccine Safety Monitoring

COVID-19 vaccines are being administered under the most intensive vaccine safety monitoring effort in United States History. These web-based platforms give CDC scientists information about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in real time. If any vaccine safety issues—also called adverse events—are reported, CDC scientists can quickly study them and determine if there is a safety concern with a particular vaccine. Here are some of the tools that CDC uses to keep close tabs on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines:

- [v-safe](#): Use your smartphone to tell CDC how you're feeling after your COVID-19 vaccination and personalized health check-ins to make sure you're doing well
- [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#): VAERS is the national system that collects reports of adverse events that happen after vaccination.

Additional Information

Visit www.health.nd.gov/together for more information.

[COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine for Children \(aap.org\)](#)

[The Science Behind the COVID-19 Vaccine: Parent FAQs - HealthyChildren.org](#)

[Pfizer EUA Fact Sheet for Recipient and Caregivers](#)