

Frequently Asked Questions About the COVID Vaccine for Children Age 5-11

November 9, 2021

- **If kids have a lower risk of a serious COVID infection, why should they get the vaccine?**
 - Kids make up more than 25% of the new COVID cases in the US
 - Although many children have mild disease, some get very sick and some die. COVID is the eighth leading cause of death in children in the US.
 - As of Halloween, 765 kids in the US have died of COVID, 8600 have been hospitalized, and 5200 had MIS-C (multisystem inflammatory syndrome post COVID).
 - Children are at risk for long-term health problems from a Delta variant.
 - They may not be able to return to normal activities for a long time after a COVID.
 - Kids can spread COVID to those around them. Vulnerable members of their family and community are especially at risk. Vaccination helps reduce spread and slow development of variants.
 - Most kids do better academically and socially with in-person learning. There have been thousands of school closures due to COVID infections. Vaccinations will help stop outbreaks and keep schools open.
- **My child already had COVID. Do they need the vaccine?**
 - Yes! Some people who had COVID can get reinfected. Giving a vaccine, even after an infection, helps boost a person's immunity and protects them from reinfection.
 - If a child had COVID, the vaccine should be given after they have fully recovered, and their isolation period is over.
 - If the child has MIS-C, they need to wait 90 days before they can be vaccinated.
- **What are common side effects of the vaccine?**
 - Side effects such as arm soreness, swelling near the injection site, fatigue, muscle aches, and headache are common. These usually are mild and resolve in few days.
 - Severe allergic reaction is rare and treatable.
 - If your child has these side effects, it does not mean the vaccine "gave" them COVID, and the side effects are not contagious to others.
- **What about long-term side effects?**
 - Historically, serious vaccine related side effects occur within the first two months of vaccination. Clinical trials provided minimum of 2 months follow up to ensure that serious side effects were captured. Post-authorization and post-licensure of Covid vaccines will continue to make sure that serious and late side effects are captured should they occur. Millions of adults and older children got Covid vaccines safely, including thousands of children ages 5-11.
 - mRNA in the vaccine is broken down and eliminated by the body within a few days. It never goes into the nucleus (the part of our cells where DNA is located) so it cannot change your child's genes.
 - The other inactive ingredients in the vaccine have been used safely in other medications and foods for many years. There are no preservatives in the mRNA Covid vaccines.
- **Could the COVID vaccine affect my child's future fertility?**

- Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation on social media about vaccination and fertility. Misinformation confuses public and spreads unfounded fears.
- Fertility experts at the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, the Mayo Clinic, and the Centers for Disease Control all agree that COVID vaccines are safe and beneficial to the recipient. They all strongly recommend COVID vaccines for pregnant women, for breastfeeding moms who recently delivered, and for all women of child-bearing age.
- Animal studies and human clinical trials showed no reproductive harm from mRNA COVID vaccines.
- Pregnant women received mRNA COVID vaccines safely. Millions of people worldwide of reproductive age have gotten the vaccine without fertility issues.
- **What about the risk of myocarditis?**
 - The most serious side effect we have seen following mRNA COVID vaccination is heart inflammation, known as myocarditis. It is rare. The condition is more common among adolescent boys and young men, is typically mild, and most children get better in less than a week.
 - On the other hand, children who get COVID infection are at increased risk of serious heart inflammation.
 - The benefit of vaccination to children heavily outweighs the risk of myocarditis.
- **Can my child get the COVID vaccine and another vaccine at the same time?**
 - Yes. In fact, if your child has not received flu vaccine this year, we recommend they get both flu and COVID vaccines.
- **Should I wait until my 11-year-old turns 12 to get the higher dose?**
 - Vaccines are given by age, not weight. A large 11-year-old and a small 11-year-old will have similar immune systems and need the same dose. The lower dose of the 5-11 vaccine will still help your child build immunity against this virus.
 - It is important to vaccinate children as soon as possible as COVID is widely spread.
 - If your child turns 12 while waiting for the second dose, he/she can receive the adult dose.
- **Are there any children who should NOT get the COVID vaccine?**
 - Children who had serious allergic reaction to COVID vaccine or have known allergy to a vaccine component should not initiate or complete vaccination series.
 - According to the AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics), all eligible children, especially those with medical issues, should be vaccinated against COVID as soon as possible.
 - Children with severe food allergies, even egg, can safely receive the vaccine.