

Questions and Answers

About the COVID-19 Vaccine

Many parents have questions about COVID-19 vaccines, which are now available to children 5 – 11 years old. This means anyone 5 and up can get the vaccine. Here are answers to some of the questions you may have.

How do we know COVID-19 vaccines are safe for kids?

Before getting Food and Drug Administration (FDA) emergency use authorization for children 5 – 11 years, clinical trials showed COVID-19 vaccines to be very safe and effective for adults and teens age 16 and up. Trials involved tens of thousands of volunteers. After getting additional safety data for younger children, the FDA extended authorization to children five to 11 years old. Clinical trials are underway for children as young as six months old.



More than 191 million people have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 in the United States. The vaccines continue to be monitored very closely. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) say that COVID-19 vaccines will have “the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.”

Can COVID-19 vaccines affect fertility?

No. There’s no evidence that any vaccine, including those for COVID-19, causes fertility side effects. The vaccines don’t affect puberty or a child’s reproductive development in any way. It is safe for pregnant women and anyone who wants to become pregnant in the future. In fact, among the millions of people now immunized, there are women who got the COVID-19 vaccine while pregnant and women who became pregnant after getting it. Doctors have watched these cases closely and have reported no safety problems.

Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my child’s DNA?

No. COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. These vaccines work by giving your cells’ protein making factories information to make the protein which is found on the outside of the COVID virus. Your body’s own immune system then sees those proteins and knows to make antibodies to protect you against infection.

The messenger RNA from the vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. This means the genetic material in the vaccines cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way. All COVID-19 vaccines work with the body’s natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease.

After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, will my child test positive for COVID-19 on a viral test?

No. None of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection. Neither can any of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States.

Can a COVID-19 vaccine make my child sick with COVID-19?

No. None of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines or COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facats.html>; American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/The-Science-Behind-the-COVID-19-Vaccine-Parent-FAQs.aspx>