What should you know about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines for your teenagers?

Catching COVID-19 can be **very bad** for your children.

Pfizer's and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccines are **safe for people 12-17 years old.**

The COVID-19 vaccine **protects your teens** from getting very sick from COVID-19.

Catching COVID-19 can be very bad for your child if they haven't gotten a COVID-19 vaccine yet.

Being young and healthy doesn't make your child immune to COVID-19. Young people who catch the virus can still get very sick or even die from the disease.

Compared to those who got a vaccine, Teens without a vaccine were nearly **2 times** more likely to need the hospital if they caught COVID-19.

Compared to those who got a vaccine and a booster shot, Teens without a vaccine were nearly **3 times** more likely to need the hospital if they caught COVID-19.

The benefits of COVID-19 vaccines outweigh the known and possible risks, including the risk of myocarditis and pericarditis (inflamed heart tissue).

You can protect yourself, your loved ones, and your family by getting your teen a COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 Vaccine Answers for

Parents of Teenagers (12-17 years old)

americares

Does my teen need a COVID-19 vaccine? Why?

YES!

COVID-19 vaccines and boosters help protect people **12 and older** from getting COVID-19. A COVID-19 vaccine also helps keep them from getting very sick if they do happen to catch the virus.

What COVID-19 vaccine can my child get?

If your child is between the age of 12 and 17, then they can get the **Pfizer or Moderna vaccine** as their first two shots.

- If they get a **Pfizer primary series**, they should get a booster shot of the Pfizer vaccine **5 months** after the 2nd dose.

Staying up to date with their vaccines will give them the most protection against COVID-19.

How does a COVID-19 vaccine affect my child's normal vaccine schedule?

It doesn't. Your teen can receive the COVID-19 vaccine along with other vaccines. But, they does not have to get more than one vaccine in a single visit. Talk to their doctor if you have questions about their vaccine schedule.

Last Updated August 2022

Are the vaccines and boosters safe for my teen?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines provide a safe and strong defense against COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the most in-depth safety review in U.S. history, which includes studies in teens and pre-teens.

Your child can't get COVID-19 from any COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccine has not been shown to make it harder for anyone, even teens and pre-teens, to have children in the future.

Rare cases of heart inflammation

In very rare cases, tissue around the heart might become inflamed after getting a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. This "myocarditis" or "pericarditis" has been most common in males from 12 to 17 years old after their 2nd dose.

This might sound scary, but know that:

1. **These cases are very rare.** The risk may be lowered by waiting 8 weeks between the 1st and 2nd doses.

2. **Most cases are minor.** Doctors can treat it with anti-inflammatory medicines or a prescription. It can even get better on its own. Patients often return to their daily activities after their symptoms improve.

3. **There is a higher chance of getting heart inflammation from a COVID-19 infection than from a COVID-19 vaccine.** COVID-19 infection causes myocarditis/pericarditis in about 1% of children, and their recovery time is much longer.

Side Effects

It is normal for your teen or pre-teen to feel some side effects from the vaccine. These are signs that the vaccine is doing its job.

After they get the shot, your child might feel

- tired,
- a headache,
- chills,
- a fever, or
- a sore arm

These side effects should go away in 2-3 days.

What should you do before getting your teen a COVID-19 vaccine?

- Don't give them acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen before they get their shot.
- Tell the healthcare worker if your teen has any allergies or a history of bad reactions.
- Wait at the vaccine center for 15-30 minutes after getting the shot
- Talk to your teen's doctor about vaccine side effects.

Plan to get their COVID-19 vaccine at **www.vaccines.gov.**