

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents, Guardians, and Teens

Q: Are there vaccines available for adolescents? Are they safe for children?

A: COVID-19 vaccines are [safe and effective](#). In the United States, one COVID-19 vaccine has been granted authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in people age 12 and older – the Pfizer vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine had one of the largest clinical trials in history, with more than 45,000 voluntary participants, including more than 2,000 adolescents. The other available vaccines, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, which did not include those age 16 and 17 in their early Phase 3 clinical trials, only are authorized for those age 18 and older.

Q: Is parental/guardian consent required?

A: Yes. Children under 18 who are not emancipated must have parental or legal guardian consent for any vaccine. A parent or legal guardian generally should accompany the minor to receive the vaccine, unless the administration of the vaccine occurs in a physician’s office, school-based or school-associated clinic setting or similar setting.

Q: How long does it take for the vaccine to work?

A: The Pfizer vaccine is a two-dose series. The second dose is due 21 days after the first dose. Both doses are needed to achieve maximum protection. A person is considered fully immunized two weeks following the second dose.

Q: What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines?

A: The most common side effects include soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site; fever and/or chills; headache; fatigue; and muscle or joint pain. These side effects are normal and a sign that your body is creating an immune response to protect you from COVID-19. Side effects typically last only a few days, and may increase with the second dose.

Q: Will COVID-19 vaccines change my DNA?

A: No. [COVID-19 vaccines](#) will not alter your DNA. The Pfizer vaccine is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. It provides instructions for the body to create the harmless surface or “spike” protein found in the virus that causes COVID-19; the body responds by building antibodies to destroy the protein.

Q: Do COVID-19 vaccines implant people with a tracking microchip?

A: No, vaccine injections do not contain tracking microchips.

Q: Do COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility? What about autism?

A: No. There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems or autism.

Q: I’ve heard about rare cases of heart inflammation, called myocarditis, after vaccination. Should I still get myself or my child vaccinated?

A: Yes. The CDC continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 12 years of age and older, given the risk of COVID-19 illness and related, possibly severe complications, such as long-term health problems, hospitalization, and even death. The known and potential benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks, including the possible risk of myocarditis or pericarditis. Also, most patients with myocarditis and pericarditis who received care responded well to treatment and rest and quickly felt better. If you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination, talk with your or your child’s doctor, nurse, or clinic.

Q: What myocarditis/pericarditis symptoms should I be on the lookout for after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination?

A: Be on the lookout for any of the following symptoms:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart

Seek medical care if you think you or your child have any of these symptoms within a week after COVID-19 vaccination. If you have any health problems after vaccination, report them to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System](#) (VAERS).

Q: What should I do before my vaccine appointment?

A: Eat and drink plenty of water before getting a vaccination. This is especially important for teens because [fainting after any vaccine is more common among adolescents](#). Get plenty of rest the night before your appointment if possible. Wear a short-sleeve or sleeveless shirt to allow easy access to the upper arm. If it's a colder day, layer with a cardigan or jacket that is easy to remove quickly.

Q: What should I do if I'm feeling anxious?

A: Breathe slowly and deeply before you receive the injection, and think about something relaxing. Avoid looking at the syringe, and relax the arm where you will receive the injection. Parents can calm their child's anxieties by reminding them to breathe deeply or distract them by talking to them while they are getting the vaccination.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) | [Myths vs. Facts](#) | [What to know before, during, and after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine](#)