

Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19: Youth 5-17 years old

November 2021



Pfizer-BioNTech is the only vaccine authorized for youth age 5-17. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for emergency use for children 5-17 and found it to be highly effective with no serious safety concerns. Children ages 5-11 will receive a lower dose vaccine than the dose for youth older than 12 years and adults. The dose of the vaccine is based on the age of the child, not their weight. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines require two doses, given three weeks apart. When possible, the second dose should be given at the same vaccination site as the first dose. To find out where your child can get the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, visit: <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines> or call 1-888-445-4111.



Permission from a parent or guardian is required for youth age 5-17.

- Parents or guardians can give permission in two ways:
 1. By phone with a witness listening on the phone line, as arranged by the vaccination site
 2. By written consent on paper or electronically.
- Each vaccination site has a consent form. Follow the instructions for submitting the form provided by the vaccination site.
- Some individuals under age 18 may give their own consent for vaccination. For more information, please visit: <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/public-faq>.
- It is recommended, but not required, that a parent or guardian be present during vaccination. For youth where DHHS is the legal guardian, the youth must be accompanied by a caseworker or resource parent, except at school-based vaccination clinics, where it is recommended, but not required, for a resource parent or caseworker to be present.
- If possible, youth should bring a form of identification to their appointment. If no documentation is available, parents or guardians can attest to the youth's eligibility to receive the vaccine.



The vaccine is provided at no cost. The federal government will cover the cost of your child's vaccine. You should not be charged or billed, but your provider may ask you for your or your child's insurance information so that they can bill for administering the vaccine. Your provider should also not charge for an office visit if your child goes in only to get the vaccine.



Free transportation is available. Mainers who do not have reliable access to transportation may get a ride to their vaccination appointment at no cost, including youth age 5-17. The vaccine appointment must be scheduled first, and then you can reserve a ride by calling 1-855-608-5172 (Monday through Saturday, 7:00am to 4pm) **at least 48 hours before** the appointment. The transportation provider will need to know in advance if a parent or guardian will be going to the appointment. To use this transportation service, youth age 5-15 **must** be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Parents or guardians are **not** required to accompany youth ages 16 and 17 on their ride. This transportation service is not available for drive-thru clinics.

What vaccines are currently authorized for youth age 5-17?

Currently, **only** the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been authorized for emergency use by the FDA for youth age 5-17. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine comes in two different doses, a lower dose for ages 5-11 and a higher dose for people over the age of 12. The smaller dose is what was used in the clinical trial for children age 5-11. The vaccine is packaged with different colored tops so that providers can tell the difference between the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5-11 and the one for people age 12 and older. *The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen vaccines are not yet authorized for individuals under age 18, but they are being studied for future approval.*

Who should get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent getting COVID-19. It is recommended that children with a history of a prior infection with COVID-19 should also receive a COVID-19 vaccination. It is your choice to get the vaccine. If you decide to get it, you should tell your vaccine provider if your child:

- Has a history of severe allergic reactions
- Has a fever
- Has a bleeding disorder or takes blood thinners
- Is immunocompromised or on a medicine that affects their immune system
- Has received another COVID-19 vaccine

You should talk to your child's provider if they have had a serious allergic reaction to the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or to any ingredient in the vaccine before getting the second dose.

What is in the COVID-19 vaccine?

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine contains the active ingredient of messenger RNA (mRNA) along with fat, salts, and sugars to protect the active part of the vaccine and help it work better in the body. It does not contain live COVID-19 virus, or other preservatives or substances. A person cannot get COVID-19 from getting the vaccine.

What happens after my child gets vaccinated?

Your child will need to wait 15 to 30 minutes before leaving the vaccine site so the vaccine provider can help your child if they do have an allergic reaction or other side effects. While waiting, you can sign up for v-safe to report any side effects your child experiences and get a reminder for their second dose: vsafe.cdc.gov.

It is common to have side effects one to three days after getting the vaccine. Common side effects are tiredness, muscle pain, pain in the arm where your child got the shot, fever, headache, joint pain, chills, nausea, or vomiting. These are signs the vaccine is working. If your child's symptoms don't go away within three to four days, contact their doctor or clinic. You or your vaccine provider can also report side effects to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS): vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html.

Call 911 if your child has an allergic reaction after leaving the clinic. Signs of an allergic reaction may include difficulty breathing, swelling of face and throat, fast heartbeat, a bad rash all over their body, dizziness, and weakness.

Be sure to make an appointment for your child's second dose. They'll need to come back in three weeks to get their second dose.

After your child is vaccinated, they should keep wearing their mask, stay six feet (two meters) apart, and avoid gatherings to protect those who are not yet vaccinated. It will take two weeks after your child has received their second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to get full protection from COVID-19.

It is safe to get the flu shot and other childhood vaccines at the same time your child gets the COVID-19 vaccine.

Visit www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines for more information. You can also call the COVID-19 Community Vaccination line at: 1-888-445-4111.