



# Vaccines, Boosters and Kids



**January  
2022**

INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

Vaccines have dominated news stories, divided families and communities, and impacted our daily lives by allowing the opening up of schools, work and businesses or affecting employment due to mandates and requirements.

The impact on our lives because of COVID vaccines is immense. Public health officials say they are the basis for returning to normal daily life. Governments at the local, state and federal levels are using vaccine rates as a measure of health and safety.

Many people eagerly lined up for vaccines and are now getting in line for boosters.

Conversely, other people are concerned about the safety of the vaccines. They are as anxious about the vaccines as the pro-vaccine camp is eager to get in line for a shot.

### **Kids are listening**

Regardless of adult feelings and beliefs about vaccines, it is important to recognize how kids feel. In some ways, they are caught in the middle of the requirements for attending school and activities and their parents' belief systems. This can be confusing.

Children and teens may be having the same conversations about conflicting vaccine views that their parents are having, and they may be feeling additional stress as these views affect their friendships or limit their access to activities.

They may also be concerned about getting the virus or spreading it to peers and family members.

According to Dr. Arwa Nasir, professor of pediatrics at University of Nebraska Medical Center and member of the American Academy of Pediatrics:

*“The numbers are trickling in now that [show] the COVID pandemic has really resulted in significant psychosocial stressors on children and families. We have numbers now to indicate an increase in the number of emergency room visits for mental health issues and suicide attempts. We knew that the stressors associated with the pandemic, all the way from the illness itself, the death of family members, the quarantine, the interruption of school ... we knew that this is not going to be good.”*

*<https://bit.ly/3r3O6t9>*

## **Infection rates are rising among children and teens**

In November, vaccines were approved for children as young as five. Young people are at the same risk for infection as adults, according to the CDC. In September, the CDC reported a 240% increase in kids since early July. <https://bit.ly/30TsRPv>

As they returned to school, and the highly transmissible Delta variant has circulated, infection rates and hospitalizations have spiked, and young people face the same risks as adults. Many have been hospitalized or face ongoing post-infection symptoms.

## **Information for parents**

Parents try to make the best decisions for their kids. This is not an easy task during this challenging time where so many different viewpoints are circulating.

Here are some resources that provide additional information about vaccines for kids to help parents make informed decisions about their child's health.

### **COVID-19 Vaccines for Kids: A Parent's Guide**

[www.everydayhealth.com/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines-for-kids-a-parents-guide](http://www.everydayhealth.com/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines-for-kids-a-parents-guide)

This list of eight things parents need to know may help clarify vaccine confusion:

- 1. The vaccine has been tested extensively in both children and adults.** The vaccine was in use by adults for about a year. Hundreds of millions of shots had been administered before testing a lower dose on younger ages.
- 2. Common side effects are similar for kids and adults.** Symptoms include pain at the injection site, tiredness, headaches and occasional fever. No serious adverse effects were found. Myocarditis, a very rare side effect, has been found in 1 in 26,000 young men.
- 3. Younger children get a smaller dose.** Doses are about one-third of the adult dose.
- 4. COVID-19 sickens more children than many realize.** Children are infected at higher rates than thought, and the effects can be long-lasting.
- 5. COVID-19 has impacted children's mental health.** Mental health issues are affecting kids because of disrupted activities, loss of loved ones and fear of infection.
- 6. Many pediatrician's offices will offer COVID-19 vaccines.** Kids will likely be able to get vaccinated at their current pediatrician's office.
- 7. Younger babies and toddlers could get approval soon.** Tests are currently underway for this youngest group. It's not clear if infants will ever be approved.
- 8. Immunizing children could provide a path out of the pandemic.** The CDC urges vaccines to protect recipients and reduce infectiousness for those around them.

## **Resources**

### **CDC: COVID-19 Vaccination for Children 5-11 Years Old**

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/planning/children.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/planning/children.html)

### **CDC: COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/children-teens.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/children-teens.html)

### **CDC: COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>