



## Frequently Asked Questions: Vaccines

### General questions about vaccines

#### **Q. What is the difference between required (routine) and recommended vaccinations?**

Required vaccinations (also called routine vaccinations) are required for children to enroll in and attend school or a childcare facility. The requirements vary [state by state](#). Examples include vaccines for measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox (varicella), and meningitis.

Recommended vaccinations are those that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages children to receive, but are not required for school and childcare facility enrollment. Examples include the HPV and flu vaccines. The CDC currently classifies the COVID-19 vaccine as “recommended” though it is required for school attendance in some states.

#### **Q. Who sets vaccination requirements for schools or childcare centers?**

Each state decides which vaccines are required for enrollment in and attendance at a school or childcare facility, as well as criteria for exemptions. In some cases, the decision is made at the district level. The CDC does not set vaccination requirements for schools or childcare centers.

#### **Q. Why do healthy children need to be vaccinated?**

Vaccinations are intended to help keep children healthy. Because vaccines work by protecting the body before disease strikes, if you wait until your child gets sick, it will be too late for the vaccine to work.

#### **Q. Where can I find more information on vaccinations?**

Visit the [CDC's National Immunization Program](#) website for more information.

### Questions about COVID vaccines

#### **Q. Why should I get a vaccine?**

By getting vaccinated, you reduce your risk of disease, hospitalization, and severe complications, and help prevent the healthcare system from being overwhelmed.

#### **Q. What does it cost to get the vaccine?**

COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost to everyone living in the U.S., regardless of their insurance or immigration status.

#### **Q. Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

No, none of the vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19, so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

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### Q. What age groups can receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Currently, all adults and children ages 6 months and older are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

### Q. Are the vaccines safe for children?

Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective for children ages 6 months and older. The COVID-19 vaccine program is being watched more closely than any other public health effort in U.S. history. Like adults, children and teens might have some side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. These may include pain where they received the shot, headache, fever, and muscle ache, but these effects are normal and should go away within a few days.

### Q. What are the benefits of vaccination for children?

Being vaccinated against COVID-19 helps give children strong protection against serious illness and hospitalization.

### Q. If my child already had COVID-19, should they receive the vaccination?

Yes, your child should have a COVID-19 vaccination regardless of whether they have already had COVID-19. This is because the vaccine provides additional protection by reducing the risk of a repeat infection. It is recommended that children wait one month after their COVID-19 symptoms end before getting vaccinated.

### Q. Will I need a COVID-19 booster shot?

Yes, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and CDC recommend all Americans ages 5 and older get a booster shot at the appropriate time to help protect against highly contagious new variants. If you received the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, you can get a booster shot 5 months after your second dose. If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you can get a booster shot 2 months after your shot.

## How to Spot Vaccine Misinformation

**When you see information about vaccines on news sites or social media, try the following to separate fact from fiction.**

- Check the source. Utilize information from official sources such as the World Health Organization, CDC, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, the National Institutes of Health, or the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Learn to identify trustworthy websites. Pay attention to the website addresses that can give you clues about the organization providing the information. Website addresses that includes; .gov, .edu, .org are used are considered credible sources.
- Check whether mainstream media, like major newspapers and television channels, have covered the information, and make sure that more than one media source is saying the same thing.
- Think critically. Be aware of suggestions of authority and expertise. Using words such as “research” or “doctors” does not necessarily mean the information is reputable.

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- Check your own biases. Confirmation bias, or the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one's existing beliefs, can interfere with the ability to evaluate information objectively.
- Still have questions? Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or community health provider for additional information related to vaccines.

## Recommended Resources

[Why it's Important to Vaccinate Your Children | CDC](#)

[Common Questions About Immunizations \(for Parents\) | Nemours KidsHealth](#)

[Vaccines for Your Children | CDC](#)

[Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine Webpage | American Academy of Family Physicians](#)

[Questions & Answers About COVID-19 Vaccines | The Ad Council](#)

[Vaccines for COVID-19 | CDC](#)

[Critical Updates on COVID-19 | American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence - Kaiser Permanente](#)