



News Release

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Children ages 5 – 11 now eligible for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

Pediatric vaccine will help protect children and slow disease spread across Washington

OLYMPIA – The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is now available for children 5 to 11 years old. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) expanded COVID-19 vaccine eligibility following recommendations from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup, which reviewed data that found the vaccine to be safe and more than 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 in younger children.

“As a father and as a physician, I have been eagerly awaiting the day I can get my children vaccinated,” said Secretary of Health Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH. “There are nearly 680,000 kids ages 5 to 11 in Washington. Vaccinating this younger age group will help protect them, keep students in the classroom, and bring us one step closer to ending this pandemic.”

Across the country, COVID-19 cases in children ages 5 to 11 make up nearly 40% of all cases in adolescents 18 and younger. While it is true children often have more mild cases of COVID-19 compared to adults, they can become very sick and may require hospitalization, intensive care, or a ventilator to help them breathe. [According to the CDC](#), more than 650 children under the age of 18 have died of COVID-19.

The Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 is administered as a two-dose primary series, three weeks apart. The pediatric vaccine is a smaller dose (10 micrograms) compared to the Pfizer vaccine for those 12 and older (which is 30 micrograms). Side effects reported in the clinical trial were generally mild to moderate and included sore arm, fatigue, headache, chills, fever, and nausea, with most going away within a day or two.

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COVID-19 vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. The vaccine's safety was studied in approximately 3,100 children who received the vaccine and have had no serious side effects. [Research](#) shows COVID-19 vaccines offer better protection than natural immunity alone and that vaccines, even after prior infection, help prevent reinfection. Families with questions are encouraged to visit DOH's web page [VaccinateWA.org/kids](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Programs/Immunization/VaccinateWA.org/kids) for information about vaccines and kids, or to talk to their child's health care provider.

“This is incredible news and, as a pediatrician, I am thrilled younger children are now eligible to get immunized against COVID-19,” said Chief Science Officer Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD, MPH. “It is wonderful to think that families can take advantage of vaccination for both young and old to more safely gather during the upcoming holidays.”

To schedule an appointment, reach out to your health care provider, your child's pediatrician, local pharmacy, or a mobile clinic near you. As more pediatric doses arrive into the state, DOH is updating [Vaccine Locator](#) and will add an option for “Pfizer-BioNTech Pediatric” vaccine in the coming days. If you have questions or need help scheduling an appointment, call the state's COVID-19 hotline at 833-VAX-HELP. Language assistance is available.

Due to the state's initial limited pediatric vaccine supply of roughly 315,000 doses, during the first couple weeks families may need to reach out to more than one provider to find vaccines for their kids. Over time, supply will increase and there will be enough vaccine for all eligible children.

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