

YOUR CHILD & COVID-19 VACCINES

Everything you ever wanted to know!



ARIZONA ADVISORY
COUNCIL ON INDIAN
HEALTH CARE

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COVID-19 VACCINES FOR CHILDREN



As of June 2023, the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines continue to have Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for children ages 6 months and up.

Over 120 countries worldwide have authorized COVID-19 vaccinations for children.

For the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine:

- EUA amended to include vaccine use children 6 months through 17 years of age.
- The vaccine had previously been fully authorized for use in adults 18 years of age and older.

For the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine:

- EUA amended to include use of the vaccine in individuals 6 months through 4 years of age.
- The vaccine had previously been fully authorized for use in individuals 5 years of age and older.



WHY VACCINATE IN GENERAL?



Did you know that some vaccine-preventable diseases have long lasting effects?

- Diseases like COVID-19, measles, and whooping cough can cause permanent disability.
- Permanent disability means that the child may have learning or physical deficits for the rest of their life!
- Children in the U.S. still get vaccine-preventable diseases. There have been resurgences of measles and whooping cough (pertussis) over the past few years.

1

Because it can save your child's life.

2

Because it is always better to PREVENT a disease than to treat it after it occurs.

3

To prevent long-term disability that can be caused by the illness the vaccine is meant to prevent.

4

Because it protects not just your child, but other children, your community, and future generations.

5

When children get preventable diseases, it does not just affect the child's health. It can affect the family's financial well being due to a caregiver losing time at work, medical bills, or the need for long-term disability care.

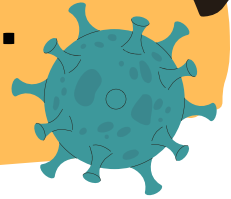
HOW DO VACCINES WORK?

Vaccines help a child's body remember how to fight an illness in the future.

Things to Know:

- Illnesses can be caused by pathogens ("germs") like viruses, bacteria, or fungi.
- Pathogens are made of subparts (also called antigens), and this is what a vaccine trains your child's body to recognize.
- Your child's body then creates antibodies in response to a pathogen's "subparts". These antibodies are like little soldiers that protect your child.
- Creating antibodies for the first time takes *time*. It takes at least two weeks, sometimes longer.
- Once created, these antibodies allow your child's immune system (the part of your child's body that will protect them from disease-causing "germs") to work with the rest of their immune system to destroy the pathogen and stop the disease.

The spike protein on a **COVID-19 virus is a subpart (also called an antigen).**



HOW DO VACCINES WORK?



Things to Know (Continued):

- At the same time that your child's body is making antibodies to fight against the new "germ", your child's body is also creating memory cells.
- These memory cells will remain alive and active at low levels, even after the pathogen is defeated by the antibodies.
- This is good for your child, because if they are ever exposed to the same pathogen again, their body does not have to start all over from scratch to make antibody "soldiers" to attack the disease causing pathogen (like a virus).
- Due to these memory cells, your child's antibody response is MUCH faster and MUCH more effective the second time around.
- This means that if your child gets exposed to the dangerous pathogen in the future (even as an adult), their immune system will be able to respond immediately, protecting against severe disease.
- If a child gets sick anyway (a "breakthrough infection") they will be less sick than they otherwise would have been if they had been unvaccinated. This is because their body will be responding to and fighting the infection quicker than they could have without memory cells already existing.



Vaccines help your child's body create antibodies to "germs", without your child ever having to get seriously sick!

HOW DO VACCINES WORK?

Vaccines are designed to "trick" your child's immune system into making antibodies against a pathogen, like the COVID-19 virus, measles, whooping cough, or the flu, without your child ever being sick.

There are several vaccine "types".

Vaccines can be:

- A weakened form of the virus that does not cause illness (chickenpox vaccine); or
- Killed copies of the virus or inactive parts of a virus that cannot cause illness (flu shots); or
- mRNA vaccines (like the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines) that prompt your child's body to make a subpart (antigen) of the virus itself. Since only a part of the virus is being made (a "subpart") it is not a full virus.

The result of all these vaccine types, is your child's body will be prompted by their immune system to respond as if they were being exposed for the first time to the real pathogen.

- Their body will make memory cells to fight the real pathogen.
- If they are ever exposed to the disease-causing pathogen for real, they will not have to wait 2+ weeks to make antibodies. They can fight the disease right away!



ARE VACCINES SAFE?



YES!

Safety is Tracked!

All vaccines approved for use or under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) in the United States, including COVID-19 vaccines, are monitored for safety and effectiveness.

For example, hundreds of millions of people in the United States have safely received COVID-19 vaccines. Continued surveillance occurs and there is mandatory reporting for any adverse events that may occur. Adverse events are rare.

While there is more than one *type* of vaccine, they all have the same end result:

- Vaccinations work to help a child's body remember how to fight an illness in the future, and prevent disease and severe illness.

It is almost always better to get a vaccine than the disease itself!



WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR CHILD'S COVID-19 VACCINE APPOINTMENT



Day Of Appointment

Your Child Should Wear Short Sleeves

- It is helpful if your child wears short sleeves, since the COVID-19 vaccine is given in the upper arm.

Wait Time

- Plan to wait an additional 15 to 30 minutes after your child is vaccinated. This allows the medical team to ensure that your child does not experience an allergic reaction or other vaccine side effects. Allergic reactions and adverse side effects are RARE.

What is the Cost?

- The COVID-19 vaccine is free.
- However, if you are insured **please bring a copy of your insurance card.** This allows the facility providing the shot to be reimbursed for the administration fee by your insurance. This is true even for IHS/638 Facilities and Urban Indian Organizations.

What Should I Bring?

- Insurance Card
- Mask or face covering
- A form of ID
- Information regarding any past allergic reactions your child may have had to anything (this can be relevant for vaccine ingredients)
- Anything else that you feel is important for the health care provider to know.

ARE THERE SIDE EFFECTS FOR THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

Common Side Effects Include

Kids Ages

6 Months to 3 Years

- Pain on the leg or arm where the shot was given
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Irritability or crying
- Sleepiness
- Loss of appetite



Kids Ages

4 Years to 17 Years

- Pain, swelling, and redness on the arm where the shot was given
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle or joint pain
- Chills
- Swollen lymph nodes

For this age group, side effects are most common after the Second Dose.

To learn more visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html>

Q&A ON COVID-19 VACCINES FOR KIDS

QUESTION:

What is in the COVID-19 vaccine for children?

ANSWER:

The COVID-19 vaccines for children have the same active ingredients as the vaccines given to adults. However, children receive a smaller and more age-appropriate dose.



QUESTION:

If the child doses are smaller, will they even work?

ANSWER:

Yes! The smaller doses were rigorously tested and found to create the needed immune response for each age group.

PARENTAL CONCERN:

How do I know there will not be long term side effects?

ANSWER:

Vaccines rarely cause long-term adverse effects. Since trials were only started in 2020, long term data is not yet available. However, a portion of the children in each age group were monitored for safety for at least two months after being fully vaccinated, and any adverse events are required, by law, to be reported.

Q&A ON COVID-19 VACCINES FOR KIDS

QUESTION:

If children do not get bad COVID-19 infections, why bother getting vaccinated?

ANSWER:

Per the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, "among children under age 18 in the United States who've gotten COVID-19:

- Over 150,000 have been hospitalized
- Over 1,700 have died

Even if your child doesn't get very sick, a COVID-19 infection could still cause health problems down the road.

Your child can also spread the virus to someone who is at risk for severe illness" - like a grandparent, elder, family, or anyone within your Tribal community.



QUESTION:

If COVID-19 vaccines do not always PREVENT illness, why bother giving it to my child?

ANSWER:

The numbers show that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death. They also give your child's immune system a 'head start' on fighting the illness, so if they do come into contact with COVID-19, they will get less sick than they otherwise would have been without the vaccine, and doesn't everyone want to spare their child extra days of feeling sick?

Q&A ON COVID-19 VACCINES FOR KIDS



QUESTION:

Will my child get myocarditis or pericarditis from the COVID-19 vaccine?

ANSWER:

Myocarditis and pericarditis are types of heart inflammation that can cause symptoms like chest pain, a fast or hard heartbeat, and shortness of breath.

Your child is **MORE LIKELY** to get heart inflammation from getting sick with COVID-19 if they are **NOT** vaccinated.

Heart inflammation after vaccination is extremely rare.
Heart inflammation after COVID-19 illness is not rare.

Heart inflammation from COVID-19 illness also tends to be worse than the rare cases of heart inflammation people have had after vaccination.

In the rare cases where this has occurred, it has occurred in male adolescents and young adults, within several days after their mRNA COVID-19 vaccination.

Patients usually recover quickly and respond well to medications and rest.

QUESTION:

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect my child's fertility?

ANSWER:

There is no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems in either men or women.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Do NOT Get Your Child Vaccinated if your child is allergic to ANY of the ingredients in the vaccine.

QUESTION:

Where can I get my child the COVID-19 vaccine?

ANSWER:

Your local IHS, 638, or Urban Indian Health Organization can advise you and vaccinate your child.

If you live in an urban setting, your child can also be vaccinated at many doctor offices, pharmacies or FQHCs.

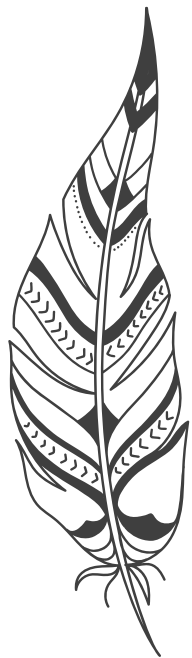
You may also find vaccines near you using the following resources:

- Go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)
- Text your ZIP code to 438829
- Call 1-800-232-0233



Important Phone Numbers

Use the below lines to write down important phone numbers, so you can find phone numbers for your child's healthcare providers all in one place.





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