

Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID vaccine (5-11yo)

- **If kids have a lower risk of a serious COVID infection, why should they get the vaccine?**
 - Kids make up more than 25% of the new COVID cases in the US
 - Although many children have mild cases, some get very sick and some can die. COVID is the eighth leading cause of death in children in the US
 - As of Halloween, 765 kids in the US have died of COVID, 8600 have been hospitalized, and 5200 had MIS-C (multisystem inflammatory syndrome post COVID)
 - Children at significant risk for long-term health problems from a Delta virus infection and will not be able to return to normal activities for a long time after a COVID infection
 - Kids can spread COVID to others including vulnerable members of their family and community. Vaccination helps reduce spread and slow potential virus mutations
 - Most kids do better academically and socially with in-person learning. There have been thousands of school closures due to COVID infections. Vaccinations will help stop outbreaks and keep schools open
- **My child already had COVID. Do they need the vaccine?**
 - Yes! Some people who had COVID can get reinfected. Giving a vaccine, even after an infection, helps boost a person's immunity and protects them from reinfection
 - If a child had COVID, the vaccine should be given after they have recovered and are symptom-free, and their quarantine period is over
 - If the child has MIS-C, they need to wait 90 days for vaccination
- **What are common side effects of the vaccine?**
 - Arm soreness near the injection site, fatigue, chills, fever, and headache. These usually resolve in 24 hours or less
 - If your child has these side effects, it does not mean the vaccine "gave" them COVID and the side effects are not contagious to others
- **What about long-term side effects?**
 - Historically, we know that if a vaccine has a serious side effect, we see it within the first two months of its use. Millions of adults and older children got the vaccine, as have thousands of children aged 5-11 years, without major side effects
 - This has been one of the most closely researched and monitored vaccines of our time
 - mRNA in the vaccine is fragile and broken down and eliminated by the body within a few days (72 hours) so it cannot have long-term side effects. It never goes into the nucleus (the part of our cells where DNA is located) so it cannot change or influence your child's genes
 - The other inactive ingredients in the vaccine have been used safely in other medications and foods for many years

- **Could the COVID vaccine affect my child's future fertility?**
 - No. unfortunately, there is a lot of misleading information circulating on social media about vaccination and fertility. Scientifically, there is no way that the vaccine can affect your child's fertility
 - Regarding menstrual changes- a small number of people who got COVID noted menstrual changes that were temporary. This also happened to a small number of people who got the vaccine
 - Animal studies and human clinical trials showed no reproductive harm from the mRNA vaccine. Pregnant women have gotten the vaccine safely. Millions of people worldwide of reproductive age have gotten the vaccine without fertility issues.
 - It should be noted that COVID itself can cause fertility issues including erectile dysfunction, if your child was unprotected and got COVID
- **What about the risk of myocarditis?**
 - Vaccine-related myocarditis is hugely different from getting viral myocarditis.
 - Vaccine-related myocarditis has been rarely seen in teenage boys, is mild, treated with ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) and resolves after a couple of days
 - In contrast, viral myocarditis from a COVID infection can cause problems with how your child's heart functions for the long-term. COVID infections cause myocarditis at much higher rates than the vaccine (current research shows the risk of myocarditis from COVID is 16x higher than from the vaccine).
 - Getting the COVID vaccine protects your child from COVID-associated myocarditis
- **Can my child get the COVID vaccine and another vaccine at the same time?**
 - Yes. In fact, if they have not gotten their flu vaccine this year, we recommend both
- **Should I wait until my 11-year-old turns 12 to get the higher dose?**
 - Vaccines are given by age, not weight. A large 11-year-old and a small 11-year-old will have similar immune systems and need the same dose. The lower dose of the 5-11 vaccine will still help your child build immunity against this virus.
- **Are there any children who should NOT get the COVID vaccine?**
 - No. According to the AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics), all children, especially those with medical issues, should be vaccinated against COVID as soon as possible.
 - If your child had a severe reaction to the first dose of the COVID vaccine, a second dose is not recommended. This is rare.
 - Children with severe food allergies, even egg, can safely receive the vaccine