

PEDIATRIC VACCINE FAQs

Children 5 and Older

Boston Public Health Commission Guidance

Updated: 06/17/2022

WHY SHOULD I GET MY CHILD VACCINATED?



- The vaccine **protects you and your child** from severe illness from COVID-19. Even though COVID-19 is usually milder in children, some children can get very sick and have lasting health problems from the disease (known as “Long COVID”).
- Children can **spread the virus to others** even if they don’t feel sick, including children too young to be vaccinated and other family and friends who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.
- Vaccinating your child can help **keep them in school** and makes it safer for them to **enjoy** the activities they **love!**

IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE SAFE FOR MY CHILD?

- The COVID-19 vaccines are **safe and effective** for adults and children. They have gone through the most intensive safety monitoring in **US history**.
- **Millions** of children ages 5 and older have safely received the vaccine.



HOW MANY DOSES DOES MY CHILD NEED TO BE FULLY VACCINATED?



- Children ages **5 - 11 years old** need to have **two doses** of the COVID-19 vaccine to be considered **fully vaccinated**. More than one dose is needed for your child to have the **most protection** and build greater immunity.
- **Children 5 years old and older** should receive the COVID-19 **booster shot** at least **five months** after completing their second COVID-19 dose.
- If your child has any medical conditions, contact your healthcare provider to see if they are eligible for an additional dose and to confirm that they are **up to date** with their COVID-19 vaccines.

CAN MY CHILD GET THE VACCINE IF I'M NOT THERE?

Yes, but completed and signed **consent forms** are required for a child to be vaccinated without a parent being present. Consent forms can be found on the **Mass.gov website**.



WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

- **Common side effects** are like those of other vaccines including pain, swelling, or redness in the arm where the vaccine was given, feeling tired, headache, muscle ache, nausea, fever, or chills. These side effects are a sign that your child's immune system is **building protection**.
- Side effects tend to be **mild** in children and usually last **less than a day**.
- Severe side effects are **very rare**.
 - Severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) can happen after any vaccine but is rare. Everyone is observed by a medical professional after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. If a reaction does happen it is treated right away.
 - A small number of adolescents have had inflammation of the heart (myocarditis or pericarditis) after receiving their vaccine. Most cases are mild and respond well to treatment and rest.
- **Your child cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.**
- There is **no evidence** that COVID vaccines affect **development** or **fertility** in children or adults.



HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

The vaccine is **free**, and you will **never** be asked to show proof of health insurance, ID or immigration status to receive your Covid-19 vaccine at a BPHC sponsored site!

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THE COVID-19 VACCINE



- Before getting them vaccinated, **talk with your children** about possible side effects and what to expect.
- It is **not recommended** to provide **pain relieving medication** prior to getting vaccinated to try to prevent possible side effects.

*If you still have **questions** about the benefits vs. risk of vaccinating your child, BPHC encourages you to discuss it with your child's pediatrician or other trusted medical provider.*