



# Shared conversation tool for COVID-19 vaccinations

The American Academy of Family Physicians is committed to enhancing awareness among family physicians and primary care teams of the significance of COVID-19 vaccinations. This shared conversation tool will help you initiate discussions with patients, parents and caregivers about the critical importance of vaccinations to prevent COVID-19 infections or minimize their severity. It offers evidence-based strategies that can be seamlessly incorporated into your practice workflow. In addition, it lists steps for clearly communicating the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines to help patients and families make informed health care decisions.

**Family physicians and other primary care clinicians are trusted sources of health information. As you care for your patients of all ages, it is important to strongly recommend COVID-19 vaccinations.**

Table 1 lists the 2025-26 COVID-19 vaccination recommendations to help protect patients from serious illness or hospitalization due to currently circulating strains of the virus.

**Table 1. 2025-26 COVID-19 vaccination guidance and age-based recommendations**

6 Months to 23 months	
Children in this age group who are unvaccinated (i.e., never received any COVID-19 vaccine doses) are recommended to receive...	2 doses of the Spikevax (Moderna) vaccine 1 month apart
Children in this age group who have previously received 1 or more doses of the Moderna vaccine are recommended to receive...	1 dose of the Spikevax (Moderna) vaccine
2 to 18 years	
Children in the following risk groups are recommended to receive 1 dose regardless of prior COVID-19 vaccination status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Persons at high risk of severe COVID-19</li><li>• Residents of long-term care facilities or other congregate settings</li><li>• Persons who have never been vaccinated against COVID-19</li><li>• Persons whose household contacts are at high risk for severe COVID-19</li></ul>	1 dose of an age-appropriate vaccine
19 to 64 years	
People in this age group who have previously received 1 or more doses of any COVID-19 vaccine are recommended to receive...	1 dose of an age-appropriate vaccine
65 years and older	
People in this age group are recommended to receive...	2 doses of any 2025-26 COVID-19 vaccine, administered 6 months apart

For more information, please visit the [AAFP's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinical Guidance](#).

**Access the AAFP's comprehensive 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccination schedule at <https://www.aafp.org/family-physician/patient-care/prevention-wellness/immunizations-vaccines/immunization-schedules.html>.**

## Integrating evidence-based strategies into practice

By adhering to the following best practices, family physicians and other primary care clinicians can implement evidence-based strategies in their practice workflow to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates:

- **Use electronic health record alerts** to identify patients who need to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or complete their vaccine series. A real-time prompt can encourage care team members to offer the COVID-19 vaccine to unvaccinated patients during the clinical encounter.
- **Implement standing orders** for COVID-19 vaccinations so care team members are empowered to vaccinate patients.
- **Incorporate a health maintenance alert** into the patient care portal to let unvaccinated patients or their parents know they need to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. An alert may encourage patients or their parents to ask about COVID-19 vaccinations at a future appointment.
- **Schedule an appointment for the next vaccination** if another COVID-19 vaccine dose is recommended. This will help ensure the patient returns to complete their COVID-19 vaccine series. If a patient receiving the COVID-19 vaccine does not need to return for another dose, schedule an appointment for next season's vaccination. This will help remind them about the importance of COVID-19 vaccinations for the upcoming year.

### STEPS TO SUCCESSFULLY COMMUNICATE ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS FOR PATIENTS 6 MONTHS AND OLDER

