



## QUICK CONVERSATION GUIDE ON COVID-19 Vaccinations for Children 6 Months and Older

As you care for childhood and adolescent patients, it is important to **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** COVID-19 vaccines. Family physicians are the most valued and trusted sources of health information for their patients. While many parents and caregivers believe that vaccines are important, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many others expressed skepticism, were concerned, and became hesitant about all vaccines.

Now that the COVID-19 vaccines are widely available for children and adolescents 6 months and older, parents and caregivers may have questions for you. Answering their questions and providing your expert opinion about COVID-19 vaccines can help parents and caregivers feel confident about vaccinating their children and adolescents.

Conveying accurate vaccine information is critical to dispel common myths, misinformation, and disinformation. **It's important to inform parents and caregivers that you **STRONGLY RECOMMEND COVID-19 vaccines for all children and adolescents 6 months and older to give families and communities the most powerful protection against this disease.****

To guide you and your practice team in these conversations, the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) has provided common questions, quick answers, and resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assist you in these important discussions.

### Importance of Vaccinations

#### Why does my child need to be vaccinated?

- COVID-19 can cause health complications for children of all ages.
- COVID-19 can cause severe illness or death, even in children.
- COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting children from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and even dying if they get infected.
- COVID-19 vaccines can help protect siblings who are not eligible for vaccination and other vulnerable family members.
- COVID-19 vaccines can help keep kids in school and help them safely participate in sports, playdates, and other group activities.

**RESOURCE:** [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine \(CDC\)](#)

### Potential Side Effects

#### What are COVID-19 vaccine side effects?

- Side effects in children may include a sore arm, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, nausea, and fever.
- These are normal signs that their body is building protection and the side effects should go away in a few days.
- Most children may not have any side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine.

#### Are my children at risk for myocarditis or pericarditis?

- Myocarditis and pericarditis after COVID-19 vaccination are rare.
- Most rare cases have been reported in male adolescents and young adults.
- The CDC and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will continue to monitor and evaluate reports of myocarditis and pericarditis after administration of COVID-19 vaccines.
- The benefits of COVID-19 vaccines far outweigh the known potential risks of contacting COVID-19.

**RESOURCE:** [Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines \(CDC\)](#)

### Severity of COVID-19 Infection

#### Is COVID-19 serious for children?

- COVID-19 can make children very sick, and some children with COVID-19 need to be hospitalized.
- COVID-19 infection may even cause some children to die.
- Age may be associated with the risk of severe illness, especially those children and adolescents between 7 days and 18 years of age.
- Infants make up a disproportionate number of severe, acute COVID-19 cases.
- COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at reducing risk of hospitalization and death in children and adolescents.
- COVID-19 may cause some children to develop serious complications, such as multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C).
- Children may also develop post-COVID-19 complications (also called long-COVID).

**RESOURCE:** [A Safer, More Reliable Way to Build Protection \(CDC\)](#)

### Safety

#### Is it safe for my children to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- COVID-19 vaccines were developed using science that has been around for decades.
- Clinical trials and ongoing safety monitoring show that COVID-19 vaccines are safe for children and adolescents.
- Studies of COVID-19 vaccines showed approximately 90% protection against symptomatic infection, severe illness, and death.
- Hundreds of millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines under the most intensive safety monitoring program in U.S. history.
- **V-Safe** is a safety monitoring system available for you to enroll your children confidentially. It is a free, smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and a web survey to check-in after vaccination.

**RESOURCE:** [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine](#)