UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
HEALTH CARE

COVID-19 VACCINES: GET THE FACTS

What is the COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines protect you from the virus that causes COVID-19 which can cause serious illness or death. Getting vaccinated will help keep you, your family, and your community healthy and safe. The authorized vaccines are very effective at preventing severe disease and hospitalization from COVID-19.

Can children get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine for emergency use for children ages 12 and older. This is the only COVID-19 vaccine available to children at this time.

Is it safe to vaccinate my child against COVID-19?

Yes. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be vaccinated against COVID-19 when they are eligible (currently ages 12 and older) as an important step in ending the pandemic. Children can get COVID-19 just like adults. While most children with COVID-19 may not end up as getting sick as adults with COVID-19 might, they are still at risk for severe illness and can spread the virus on to other children, as well as adults who may experience severe illness. Vaccinating children is safe and effective for your child and your family and is an important step to returning to normal things like in-person learning, sports, and activities.

What side effects from the vaccine can I expect for my child?

Children receiving the vaccine may experience the same side effects as an adult would. Common side effects include a sore arm, headache, fever, chills, or fatigue lasting up to around 48 hours after vaccination. These side effects are normal and show that the body is mounting a response to the vaccine, which helps your child's body to protect itself against the COVID-19 virus.

Will the vaccine impact my child's development?

No. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine get vaccinated as soon as they are able. Clinical trials show that this vaccine is safe and effective for children.

Can the COVID-19 vaccine give my child COVID-19?

No. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. This vaccine gives your child's cells instructions for how to make a harmless protein that is unique to the virus, which then teaches their body how to fight the virus that causes COVID-19 if they are exposed in the future. COVID-19 vaccines do not contain the virus, so they can't give your child COVID-19.

Does an mRNA vaccine change my child's DNA or genetic code?

No. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. The messenger RNA contained in the COVID-19 vaccine cannot integrate into your child's DNA or their human genes and is broken down very quickly once it's exposed in the body. The COVID-19 vaccines cannot change your child's DNA.

If you have questions or concerns about vaccinating your child, please talk with your pediatrician or primary care provider.

For more information, visit

➔ **uihc.org/covid-vaccine**