Information About the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine: For Parents

On May 10, 2021, the U.S. FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for youth ages 12 to 15 years, to protect them against COVID-19.

This fact sheet contains information about the Pfizer vaccine that is intended to help you make the most informed decision about getting your children vaccinated to better protect them, their loved ones, and tribal communities, both urban and rural. It's also always important to consult with your child's provider before making medical decisions if you have any questions or concerns.

What is the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine?

The Pfizer-BioNTech (Pfizer) vaccine uses mRNA technology to start an immune response in our bodies that will produce antibodies to protect against future infection of COVID-19. mRNA technology has been studied for decades, and Pfizer-BioNTech and other companies used this technology to assist in creating the COVID-19 vaccines.

The Pfizer vaccine is given in a series of two doses, given three weeks apart, and injected into the muscle in the upper arm. Plan for your child to return 21 days after receiving the first dose.

How much does the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine cost?

Nothing, it's free even without insurance. You should not be required to provide insurance to receive the Pfizer vaccine. However, if you do have insurance, you can bring it with you to your vaccination appointment and the clinic can charge your insurance. This will have no effect on your premium whatsoever.

Who is the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for?

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine has been authorized for people 12 years or older. However, you should talk with your child's provider to discuss the risks and benefits before vaccinating if your child:

- has any allergies.
- has a bleeding disorder or is on a blood thinner.
- is immunocompromised or is taking medication that affects their immune system.
- has a fever.
- is pregnant or breastfeeding.[1]

If your child had a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of the vaccine or if they have had a severe allergic reaction to any of the vaccine ingredients, they should not get the vaccine.

A list of ingredients can be found on the official Pfizer-BioNTech fact sheet.[2]

Why should I consider the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for my child? What are the benefits of vaccinating my child?

By choosing to vaccinate our children, we protect them from serious illness and make our communities less vulnerable to infection. The vaccine also protects our children if they do get infected with COVID-19 after vaccination by significantly decreasing their chances of ending up in the hospital or dying from COVID-19.

Those who are fully vaccinated (two weeks after receiving both doses of the vaccine) are able to safely incorporate themselves back into certain daily activities. According to CDC, fully vaccinated individuals can go back to work, school, and social gatherings without fear of severe infection of hospitalization due to COVID-19.[3]

What are the risks of getting vaccinated?

Common side effects that have been reported after receiving the Pfizer vaccine include:

- pain, swelling, or redness at the injection site.
- tenderness and swelling of the lymph nodes in the same arm of the injection.
- headache or fatigue.
- muscle or joint pain.
- chills or fever.
- nausea or vomiting.[1]

These symptoms typically resolve within a few days. Call your child's provider if any side effects do not go away. You can also report any side effects to Pfizer Inc. at 1–800–438–1985.

While more serious side effects like severe allergic reactions and Bell's palsy have been reported among adults in clinical trials, these side effects are generally considered rare and there is currently not enough information to determine if they were caused by the vaccine.

For youth ages 12 to 15 years of age, clinical trials showed no notable serious adverse events patterns between those who received the vaccine and those who did not.[1]

If you have other questions or concerns, it's always good to check with your child's provider. You can also visit Pfizer-BioNTech's website, www.cvdvaccine.com.

Is the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine safe for my child?

Yes. Pfizer has included over 2,200 youth ages 12 to 15 years in clinical trials since October 2020. From the youth who participated in the clinical trial, roughly 1,100 youth received at least one dose of the Pfizer vaccine. This clinical trial included a percentage of Native people (0.4%) like the clinical trial which enrolled people 16 years and older (0.6%) and assessed the vaccine's safety and efficacy.

To date, over 23,000 people ages 12 and up have participated in clinical trials and over 60 million people in the U.S. have chosen to be fully vaccinated with both doses of the Pfizer vaccine.[4] Research studies are ongoing, and CDC and FDA will continue to closely monitor any negative side effects that occur.[1]

Will the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine prevent my child from getting COVID-19?

Although clinical trials indicate that the Pfizer vaccine has been shown to prevent COVID-19, it may not protect everyone.[1] It is important to continue to practice all safety measures to help stop the spread of COVID-19, including:

- wearing a mask.
- social distancing.
- washing your hands.
- following local public health recommendations.

How should I talk to my child about receiving the vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccines are new, and it's normal for people to have questions about them, including kids! We encourage you to talk with your child about the vaccine and listen to any questions or concerns they might have. Having safe, honest conversations with our child about their health care is important in helping prepare them to make educated medical decisions for themselves in the future.

For resources on how to talk with your child about COVID-19 or the COVID-19 vaccines, you can visit the CDC website or download one of our culturally attuned info sheets like "Talking with Children About COVID-19" at our COVID-19 information page or COVID-19 vaccination page.

References

1. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (EUA) COVID-19 2019 (COVID-19 May 10, 2021. https://www.fda.gov/media/144413/download

2. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (EUA) COVID-19 2019 (COVID-19) 12 May 10, 2021. http://labeling.pfizer.com/ShowLabeling.aspx?id=14472&format=pdf

3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. After You're Fully Vaccinated. April 27, 2021. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html

4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States. COVID Data Tracker. May 12, 2021. https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations

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