

Have questions about COVID-19 shots for children & teens? (under 18)



Visit vaccinate.wv.gov to view FAQs and to use the WV COVID-19 Vaccination Due Date Calculator to find out when you or your child/teen are due for a COVID-19 shot.

Note: While the information in this FAQ is current as of the listed date, guidelines are subject to change.

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WHAT IS COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus spreading around the world and locally. The virus spreads mainly through droplets made when an infected person exhales or speaks, and especially when they yell, sing, cough, or sneeze. People with COVID-19 can have a range of symptoms, from mild sickness to extreme illness that needs hospital treatment or worse. Some otherwise healthy people can get very sick, with symptoms lasting months and longer (often called “post-COVID conditions” or “long COVID”).

ARE CHILDREN AND TEENS AT RISK FOR COVID-19?

Yes. Millions of children have gotten COVID-19. COVID-19 is a leading cause of pediatric death. Tens of thousands of kids have been hospitalized with COVID-19, and many had no known pre-existing conditions. Each person’s body reacts differently to the virus. COVID-19 disease can have long-term health consequences, even from mild cases. Some otherwise healthy people can have symptoms that last months or longer (called “long COVID”). Although older adults and people with underlying health conditions have more risk for severe COVID-19, children and teens can also be severely affected.

Calculator

For a simplified way to find out when to get a COVID-19 shot, use the **WV COVID-19 Vaccination Due Date Calculator** by scrolling down at vaccinate.wv.gov.

The calculator is a free, online tool to quickly help anyone figure out when they are due for a COVID-19 shot, including for those immunocompromised.

West Virginians can also call the 24/7 WV COVID-19 Hotline at 1-800-887-4304 to learn when they are due or ask other COVID-19 vaccination questions.

ARE KIDS ELIGIBLE FOR COVID-19 SHOTS IN WV?

Yes. West Virginians ages 6 months and older* are eligible for COVID-19 shots. To stay up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccination for maximum protection against COVID-19:

First, everyone ages 6 months and older needs a **primary series** (the initial set of shots that teach the body to recognize and fight the virus).

Next, some children ages 6 months to 5 years and most ages 5 years and older need to **get boosted** (booster shots help the body build or restore immunity when protection from the primary series starts to fade).

Eligibility for Omicron (bivalent) updated COVID-19 vaccines can vary based on age and vaccine type (Pfizer or Moderna). Talk to a healthcare provider to learn more.

- For more COVID-19 vaccine eligibility information, visit: <https://bit.ly/C19Vax4SpecificPpl>
- For more on staying up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccination, visit: <https://bit.ly/COVID19vaxBooster>

*Minors need guardian consent (forms available from vaccine provider).

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WHICH KIDS CAN GET BOOSTER SHOTS, AND WHAT IS AN OMICRON BOOSTER?

Most children 5 years and older and some ages 6 months to 5 years* are recommended to get an Omicron booster shot when due. Omicron (bivalent) vaccines are updated based on the original virus and common Omicron variants. Disease from Omicron variants led to the most hospitalizations of any COVID-19 variant in the US. Learn about staying up-to-date on COVID-19 shots: <https://bit.ly/COVID19vaxBooster>.

* Updated Omicron (bivalent) vaccine eligibility can vary for ages 6 months to 5 years based on the child's age and primary series vaccine type (Pfizer or Moderna).

ARE THERE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMMUNOCOMPROMISED KIDS?

Yes. For moderately to severely immunocompromised people, an "additional primary dose" (another shot in the primary series) is often recommended before getting boosted. There are also considerations related to the timing of certain shots.

An additional mRNA COVID-19 shot following the primary vaccination series is often given to people who may not have gained a strong enough immune response due to underlying medical conditions and/or medications. **(This additional primary shot is not the booster shot.)**

In addition to vaccination, some immunocompromised children ages 12 years and older may be eligible for Evusheld, a medicine given every six months for more protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. Talk to a healthcare provider about this option.

- General COVID-19 vaccine eligibility: <https://bit.ly/C19Vax4SpecificPpl>
- COVID-19 vaccination for those who are immunocompromised: <https://bit.ly/C19AddlDose>
- Medications that cause a person to be considered immunocompromised: <https://bit.ly/ModSevImmunocomp>
- Information on staying up-to-date: <https://bit.ly/COVID19vaxBooster>

WHICH CHILDREN/TEENS UNDER AGE 18 SHOULD NOT GET A COVID-19 SHOT?

Few people should not be vaccinated. COVID-19 shots are not recommended for anyone with a severe or immediate allergic reaction to a vaccine ingredient or who had a serious allergic reaction to a COVID-19 shot (discuss with a healthcare provider). COVID-19 shots are also not currently recommended for children under age 6 months. Click here to learn more: <https://bit.ly/C19VaccineInfoKids>

WHERE CAN CHILDREN AND TEENS GET A COVID-19 SHOT?

Many locations have COVID-19 vaccines readily available. Check with the child's healthcare provider, health department, community health center, or a local pharmacy (pharmacies offer COVID-19 vaccination for children ages 3 and older). You can find a vaccination location near you by searching your zip code at vaccines.gov. For help finding a COVID-19 vaccination location, visit vaccinate.wv.gov or call the **West Virginia COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line: 1-833-734-0965**.

SHOULD A KID WHO GOT COVID-19 AND RECOVERED GET A COVID-19 SHOT?

Yes. Immunity from having COVID-19 can wear off, and previous infection does **not** give adequate protection against new variants. Even children who had minimal or no symptoms with prior COVID could get severe disease with another infection. Children who currently have COVID-19 may get vaccinated after their isolation period. Those who recently had COVID may consider delaying COVID-19 vaccination by 3 months from infection but should consider their disease risk factors and discuss with a healthcare provider.

IS IT OK TO GET A COVID-19 SHOT WHEN GETTING OTHER SHOTS?

Yes. COVID-19 shots can be received at and around the same time as other routine vaccines, such as the flu shot. Some people might consider waiting 4 weeks after Monkeypox (orthopoxvirus) vaccination.

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IS IT POSSIBLE TO GET/GIVE COVID-19 TO OTHERS BY GETTING VACCINATED?

No. It is impossible for COVID-19 vaccines to infect anyone with the virus that causes COVID-19.

HOW DO mRNA COVID-19 VACCINES WORK?

COVID-19 vaccines work by helping your immune system build antibodies that recognize and fight the virus. COVID-19 mRNA vaccines authorized/approved in the U.S. are made of sugar, salts, lipids (fats), and messenger RNA (mRNA).

The mRNA is used to make protein, which teaches our cells how to recognize the virus. COVID-19 vaccines cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way. The mRNA breaks down and goes away quickly, leaving in its place the blueprint for protection.

ARE COVID-19 VACCINES EFFECTIVE?

Yes. Vaccination is effective at preventing kids from getting really sick, needing hospital care, or even dying, even if they do test positive for COVID. Studies have continued to show that COVID-19 vaccination makes it far less likely that children and teens ages 6 months and older will be hospitalized because of COVID-19.

ARE THE COVID-19 VACCINES SAFE?

Yes. Rigorous clinical trials found COVID-19 vaccination is safe and effective for ages 6+ months. With the most robust safety monitoring in history, COVID-19 vaccines are safe: <https://bit.ly/CovVaxSafety>

ARE THERE COVID-19 VACCINE SIDE EFFECTS?

Sometimes. Some children and teens have mild side effects after vaccination, and others do not have any. Side effects are short-lived and a sign the body is building immunity.

Common responses are pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site. Some also feel tired, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, or nausea. In very rare cases, myocarditis/pericarditis (inflammation in and around the heart) has been reported after COVID-19 vaccination (Moderna, Novavax, or Pfizer), particularly among male teens and young adults.

Risk of myopericarditis after getting an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine is lower than the risk of myopericarditis from getting COVID-19 disease. Click here to learn more: <https://bit.ly/MyoPericarditisC19Vax>

ARE COVID-19 VACCINES SAFE FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO BECOME PREGNANT?

Yes. People who want to become pregnant now, or in the future, are recommended to get vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, and many West Virginians have gone on to get pregnant after vaccination.

ARE THE COVID-19 VACCINES FREE?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines are available and at this time are free of charge for the person getting vaccinated.

LOOKING FOR MORE INFO ABOUT COVID-19 & COVID-19 VACCINES?

- CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines
- U.S. Government COVID-19 “One Stop Shop”: [COVID.gov](https://www.covid.gov)
- American Academy of Pediatrics: [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org)

Note: This FAQ is current as of 12/12/22. Guidelines may change. More on CDC guidance: <https://bit.ly/CDCc19vaxMain>

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