

Dear Michigan Immunizers,

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) appreciates your continued efforts to combat COVID-19. We recognize your diligence to ensure Michiganders are protected against COVID-19 and its emerging variants. On June 23rd, CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, endorsed the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation to [expand the use of Moderna COVID-19 vaccines to include children ages 6 through 17 years](#). ACIP now recommends that everyone **6 months and older** receive the age appropriate Moderna OR Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine series.

Moderna and Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccines' safety and effectiveness have been confirmed by clinical studies and by the millions of people who have already received them. As occurs for all vaccines—including all COVID-19 vaccines—safety monitoring will continue in all ages for whom Moderna and/or Pfizer vaccines are recommended and authorized.

You will find attached some helpful flyers to share with families when discussing the COVID-19 vaccine.

- **Why Vaccinate Your Child** (attachment)
 - Citations: [ACIP Review and Recommendation](#), [MI Data and Modeling Slides](#)
- **Reduce Child's Fear** (attachment)
 - Additional Facts:
 - Children 6 mo. to 4 years of age are hospitalized and die at a higher rate from COVID-19 than other vaccine-preventable diseases
 - Among children less than 5 years of age COVID-19 was the 5th leading cause of death

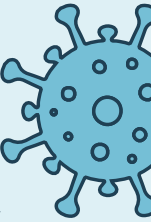
Additional resources related to the recommendations:

- Updated [Interim Clinical Considerations](#)
- Updated web pages for the public, including:
 - [Stay Up to Date with Your COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
 - [COVID-19 Vaccines for People who are Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised](#)
- American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement on [COVID-19 Vaccine in Infants, Children, and Adolescents](#), supporting vaccination for children of all ages.
- The [Pediatricians and Family Physicians Toolkit](#): including a sample letter to parents, pediatrician talking points, posters and flyers that can be hung in offices and waiting rooms, as well as digital communications like social media posts and sample text messages.
- [Kids COVID Vaccine—Michigan](#): great resources and FAQs, including linked information from the IVaccinate website.
- New PSA in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), announcing the new vaccine authorization for children 6 months and older, and a [one-pager](#) that describes some of the most effective messages when communicating with parents about the importance of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Thank you for all you have done and are doing to combat this pandemic—together we can ensure that Michigan children stay healthy and safe during this pandemic and beyond.



Why vaccinate your child against COVID-19?



Vaccination is an important tool to help protect children from COVID-19.

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The COVID-19 vaccines help prevent kids from getting severely ill, and protect them from long-term complications or even death. It is likely children will be exposed to COVID-19 at some point. Just like adults, children and teens can:

Get very sick from COVID-19.

Have both short- and long-term health problems.

Spread COVID-19 to others, including at home and school.



Almost half of children younger than 18 years old hospitalized with COVID-19 have no underlying conditions. Children who have underlying medical conditions or have a weakened immune system are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19. These underlying medical conditions include:

- Asthma or chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Sickle cell disease

Vaccination Helps Prevent Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) Associated with COVID-19

Children and teens who get COVID-19 can develop serious complications like multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C). MIS-C is a condition where different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. Most kids with MIS-C require hospitalization to get better.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, thousands of cases of MIS-C have been reported. Children ages 5 through 11 years are most frequently affected by MIS-C. CDC data from July to December 2021 show that 95% of children ages 12 through 18 years hospitalized with MIS-C were not vaccinated.



Children and Teens Can Experience Ongoing Health Problems after COVID-19



After getting COVID-19, whether mild or severe, children and teens can experience a wide range of new, returning or ongoing health problems. Sometimes called Long COVID, these include physical and mental health complications that may occur four or more weeks after initial infection.

Post-COVID (or Long COVID) symptoms can affect quality of life, including:

- Limitations in physical activity.
- Distress about symptoms.
- Mental health challenges.
- Decreased school or daycare attendance.
- Missed opportunities for participation in sports, play dates or other activities.

COVID-19 Vaccines Are Safe

Vaccines in the U.S. go through strict safety testing. Ongoing safety monitoring shows that COVID-19 vaccination continues to be safe for children and that the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh known and potential risks.

Some have expressed worries about myocarditis, but the chances of that happening are much higher if the child becomes ill. Myocarditis remains a very rare side effect and one that can be treated with rest or medication.



For more information about vaccinating children against COVID-19, visit Michigan.gov/KidsCOVIDVaccine or CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html.

Tips for Parents



Help your child be more comfortable with vaccines.



Use play to practice beforehand.

Use a favorite toy or a play medical kit to act out what happens at a vaccine appointment to help them understand what to expect.



Be honest.

Explain the vaccine might pinch for a minute, but that it won't last long and it's going to keep them from getting sick.



Bring a comfort item from home.

Young children might bring a teddy bear, a favorite blanket or a book to look at. School-aged children, could use a phone to play a game or watch a video.



Stay calm yourself.

Children pick up on the emotions of others. Take a deep breath and smile. If you are relaxed, they will feel relaxed.



Hold little ones in your lap.

This can be comforting.



Pretend to blow bubbles.

Have your child pretend to blow bubbles or blow out candles if they are worried about pain. Slow, deep breaths can be calming, as opposed to the shallow, fast breathing caused by nerves.



Pour on the positive praise.

Afterward, tell your child what a great job they did. Offer a reward like a sticker, a stop for ice cream or a trip to the park on the way home. This will help create a positive memory associated with that day.

Avoid these actions:

- 1. Don't lie.** Avoid saying things like: "It won't hurt a bit!" When your child is getting a vaccine, telling them otherwise can weaken trust between the two of you.
- 2. Stay away from scary words or threats.** Using harsh words like shot, pain or ouch, or making vaccines a threat can worsen their fear. Choose words like vaccine and pinch, and emphasize the reason they are getting the vaccine is to keep them healthy.
- 3. Don't threaten or scold them.** Don't criticize even if your child cries or screams. Reassure them that you're right there and it will be over quickly.