

COVID-19 Vaccination Side Effects in Children and Teens

Everyone 6 months and older should receive the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine protects your child against severe illness and hospitalization from COVID-19.

What you should know

- Children may have some side effects after getting their COVID-19 vaccine.
- Side effects are typically mild and temporary, starting one to two days after vaccination and going away after a few days.
- Some children have no side effects.

Common Side Effects

Younger children (ages 6 months–3 years)

- Pain on the leg or arm where the shot was given
- Irritability or crying
- Sleepiness
- Loss of appetite
- Fever
- Swollen lymph nodes



Older children (ages 4-17 years)*

- Pain, swelling, and redness on the arm where the shot was given
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle or joint pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Swollen lymph nodes

**Side effects are more common after additional doses*



Contact your health care provider if redness or tenderness where the shot was given gets worse after 24 hours, or if side effects do not go away after a few days. Call 911 if you think your child might be having a severe allergic reaction (after leaving the vaccination site).

Helpful Tips for your Child's COVID-19 Vaccination

Getting vaccine shots can be scary for children. Here are some helpful tips to make this experience comfortable and calm for your kiddos.

Before the vaccination

- Be honest with your child: Shots can sting initially, but they don't hurt for long.
- Explain to your child why the vaccines are good for them and how it keeps them safe from germs that can make them sick.



During the vaccination

- Bring a favorite toy or blanket for your child to hold on to.
- Hold your child in a comforting position like on your lap or by your side.
- Distract your child with a fun story, video or conversation.
- Support your child if he or she cries. Never scold or punish a child for not being brave.



After the vaccination

- Praise and hug your child after they get their shot to let them know everything is okay.
- Use a cool, damp cloth to help reduce discomfort where the shot was given.
- Offer liquids more often as some children may eat less during the 24 hours after getting vaccines.



CDC does not recommend taking any medication before COVID-19 vaccination to prevent vaccine-related side effects

*If your child is in pain, ask your child's health care provider if you can give them a non-aspirin pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. **Aspirin is not recommended for use in children and adolescents less than 18 years of age.***

For more information, visit covid19.nj.gov or call 855-568-0545.