

COVID-19 Vaccine for Children: Care Instructions



Overview

The COVID-19 vaccine can help your child avoid getting COVID-19, a disease caused by a type of coronavirus. COVID-19 can cause serious illnesses, such as pneumonia. It can even cause death.

Make sure your child gets all the recommended doses and any recommended booster doses.

Your child may get a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time they get other vaccines, such as the flu vaccine.

The vaccine prevents most cases of COVID-19. But if your child does still catch COVID-19, their symptoms will probably be less severe than if they didn't get the vaccine. Your child can't get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Your child might not have side effects. But if they do, they'll probably be like those of other vaccines, including:

- Fever.
- Soreness.
- Feeling very tired.

This is normal. Your child's body is building protection against COVID-19.

Your child may also have other side effects, including:

- Loss of appetite.

- Crankiness or crying.
- Chills.
- Headache.
- Pain, redness, a rash, or swelling in the arm where they had the vaccine.
- Swollen lymph nodes in the armpit of the arm where they had the vaccine.

Side effects will likely go away in a few days. Until then, it may be harder for your child to do their usual activities.

If you think your child has been exposed to COVID-19 or if they have symptoms like a cough, trouble breathing, or a new loss of smell or taste, call your child's doctor. These aren't vaccine side effects. Your child needs a COVID-19 test.

How can you care for your child at home?

- If your child has a sore arm or a fever after getting the COVID-19 vaccine, ask their doctor if your child can take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). Read and follow all instructions on the label. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20. It has been linked to Reye syndrome, a serious illness.
- Put ice or a cold pack on your child's sore arm for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your child's skin.
- If your child has side effects, such as a fever, be sure they get enough rest and drink plenty of fluids.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think your child may need emergency care. For example, call if after getting the COVID-19 vaccine:

- Your child has symptoms of a severe reaction to the vaccine. Symptoms of a severe reaction may include:
 - Severe trouble breathing.
 - Sudden raised, red areas (hives) all over your child's body.
 - Severe lightheadedness.

Call your child's doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your child has one or more of these symptoms within several weeks of getting a COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Shortness of breath.
 - Chest pain.
 - Fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart.

Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your child's doctor if your child has any problems.

©2006-2022 Healthwise, Incorporated.

This care instruction is for use with your licensed healthcare professional. If you have questions about a medical condition or this instruction, always ask your healthcare professional. Healthwise, Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.