



At Boston Children's Hospital, we are working hard to make sure that we are ready to give the COVID-19 vaccine to patients as soon as possible. This sheet provides some information about what we know now about the vaccines at this time (early January 2021).

### When will my child be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

At this point, we can't give an exact date, for 2 main reasons:

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Massachusetts state government make recommendations about which groups of people should get the vaccine and in what order. In Massachusetts (and nationally), the vaccine is first being given to health care workers and elderly people living in nursing homes. As soon as we can give the vaccine to patients, we will be ready to do so.
2. The FDA has authorized 2 different vaccines. There are other companies making vaccines too, and it's likely that more vaccines will be authorized for use. So far, no vaccines have been authorized for children younger than 16. We will be able to offer the COVID-19 vaccine to younger kids once they are approved for these ages.

### Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe for children?

**The data we have seen make us confident that the vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are safe for the ages included in the authorization.** The Pfizer vaccine is authorized for use in people 16 and older and the Moderna vaccine is authorized for use in people 18 and older.

Most new medicines and vaccines are studied in adults first, so the first authorization for the vaccines doesn't include children under 16. Companies have begun studying the vaccines in younger children, and there will be more information coming on their safety and effectiveness in children. Very rarely, some people have had allergic reactions to the vaccines, which can be treated.

### Are there side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine?

In adults, the most common symptoms after getting vaccinated are a mild-to-moderate headache, muscle aches or fatigue and sometimes a low fever. These usually don't last more than a day or two.

### Are the COVID-19 vaccines effective in children?

In adults, the vaccines authorized so far by the FDA are up to 95% effective for preventing COVID-19. **This is a very high level of protection and a very promising result.** Now that we know they are safe and effective in adults, studies have

started to include younger children, and we will be able to tell if they work as well in children as they do in adults once those studies are done.

### Should I be worried about how quickly these vaccines were created?

No. The reason that the COVID-19 vaccines were able to be made so quickly is that the government provided extra money to support the research and production. **The quality of the trials and the review of the safety and effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines has not changed from normal processes.**

### How will I know when my child is eligible to get the vaccine?

We need to get an official "green light" from the FDA, CDC and the state government. At Boston Children's, we are already working on identifying patients who are in higher-risk groups so that we can be in touch quickly once we can begin vaccinating our patients. **Please check our website for updates. (<http://www.childrenshospital.org/covid>)**

### Where will my child get the vaccine?

Boston Children's plans to run COVID-19 vaccine clinics for our patients, just like we do for yearly flu shots. It is possible that there will be sites closer to home that will give the vaccine, too. You will get a vaccine record that you can take with you.

### How many doses will my child need?

The Pfizer vaccine is given in 2 doses, with the second dose coming 3 weeks after the first. The Moderna vaccine is given in 2 doses, with the second dose coming 4 weeks after the first. Eventually, there will probably be other vaccines available with different schedules.

### After my child gets a COVID-19 vaccine, can we stop wearing masks?

No. Mask-wearing recommendations will stay the same at first. **The biggest benefit of getting the vaccine is to protect against severe disease from COVID-19.** Whether or not the vaccine prevents people from having COVID-19 without symptoms and spreading it to others is still being studied. Also, it's going to take a long time to get enough people vaccinated to keep the virus from spreading.

### How much will the vaccine cost me?

According to the CDC, vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to Americans at no cost. However, vaccination providers may charge an administration fee for giving the shot.