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.

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 most people figure out when they are due for a COVID-19 shot, including for those immunocompromised.

West Virginians can also call the WV COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line at 1-833-734-0965 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) to learn when they are due.

ARE KIDS ELIGIBLE FOR COVID-19 SHOTS?

Yes. 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:

- **Ages 6 months – 5 years:** Those under age 6 have specific guidance for their number of COVID-19 shots based on their age, COVID-19 vaccine type, and their vaccination history.

At the time of initial vaccination, depending on vaccine type, those ages 6 months—4 years are recommended to receive 2 or 3 mRNA Omicron COVID-19 shots; children age 5 years are recommended to receive 1 or 2 Omicron shots.

- **Ages 6+ years:** Those ages 6+ years should have had, or get, at least 1 Omicron (bivalent) updated mRNA COVID-19 shot, regardless of vaccine history.

For recommendations for an individual child, talk to a healthcare provider. Learn more: https://bit.ly/C19CDCUpToDate

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

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ARE THERE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMMUNOCOMPROMISED KIDS?

Yes. Those who are **ages 6 months and older** and are moderately to severely immunocompromised are eligible for another Omicron (bivalent) shot at least 2 months after their first Omicron (bivalent) mRNA COVID-19 shot.

Thereafter, healthcare providers can determine the need on an individual basis for additional Omicron (bivalent) mRNA COVID-19 shots at least 2 months apart, as needed based on the level of immunocompromise (for conditions such as stem cell transplant, CAR-T therapy, B-cell depletion, and others).

- 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**

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/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 years 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 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.

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 Mpox (orthopoxvirus) vaccination.

ARE COVID-19 VACCINES EFFECTIVE?

Yes. Vaccination is effective at preventing kids from getting really sick, needing to stay in the hospital, or even dying if they get 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. COVID-19 vaccines have the most robust safety monitoring in history: 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, 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**
- American Academy of Pediatrics: **healthychildren.org**

Note: This FAQ is current as of 5/2/23. Guidelines may change. More on CDC guidance: https://bit.ly/CDCc19vaxMain