

Survey: Communication with parents can boost COVID-19 vaccinations in children

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When deciding whether their child should get the COVID-19 vaccine, parents said a recommendation from their child's doctor will be influential, according to a [new national poll](#).

However, 70% of parents of children ages 3-11 years said they have not discussed the COVID-19 vaccine with their child's doctor. Half of parents of children ages 12-18 have not had the discussion.

The University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health sought to assess parents' stance on vaccinating children and gain insight on decision-making factors before the start of the 2021-'22 school year. The report was based on a nationally representative survey of 2,019 parents in June. The response rate was 56%.

Parents typically rely on their child's pediatrician for information and guidance on vaccines. A lack of discussion with pediatricians about COVID-19 vaccination leaves parents at a disadvantage when making an informed decision, according to the Mott Poll Report.

Among parents of children ages 12-18, 39% said their child had received a COVID-19 vaccine, 21% said their child likely would get it and 40% said it was unlikely their child would get the vaccine.

Parents of unvaccinated children ages 12-18 reported that a doctor's office would be the preferred location for vaccination.

When parents of children ages 3-11 were asked whether they would get the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available, answers were nearly evenly split (49% yes; 51% no).

Other factors besides a recommendation from their child's health care provider that would influence parents' decision to have their child age 3-18 vaccinated included:

- vaccine side effects (70%),
- testing in the child's age group (63%),
- how well the vaccine works in children (62%) and
- their own research (56%).

Authors of the report said talking with parents can ensure they have accurate information and a professional recommendation. It also provides an opportunity to differentiate between common side effects of vaccination and potentially more serious adverse events and explain the vaccine authorization process.

"Discussion with their child's health care provider can be the key for parents to get help sorting through the various data sources so they can make an informed choice that is right for their child and their family,"

according to the report.

Resources

- [AAP guidance on providing COVID-19 vaccines to adolescents](#)
- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on preparing children and adolescents for COVID-19 vaccination](#)
- [Confronting Health Misinformation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Building a Healthy Information Environment](#)

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