

## AAP recommends COVID-19 vaccines for eligible teens

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**Editor's note:** AAP interim guidance is based on current evidence and best data at the time of publication. Updates are provided to reflect changes in knowledge about the impact of the disease on children and adolescents. For the latest news on COVID-19, visit <http://bit.ly/AAPNewsCOVID19>.

The AAP recommends everyone 16 and older who meet the criteria for a priority group get vaccinated against COVID-19 and continues to push for trials in younger children and teens.

The recommendations were released Tuesday as part of new interim guidance available at <https://bit.ly/3thUOKH>.

“Research has shown the new vaccines to be remarkably effective,” AAP President Lee Savio Beers, M.D., FAAP, said in a [news release](#). “The vaccine is a powerful tool that — in conjunction with other safety measures like face masks, good hygiene and physical distancing — can help us end the suffering and death caused by COVID-19. Pediatricians can play a key role in making that happen.”

The Food and Drug Administration has granted emergency use authorization to COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. Pfizer’s vaccine can be used in people as young as 16 years, while Moderna’s is authorized for adults. Both are two-dose mRNA vaccines that were found to be 95% and 94% effective, respectively, with no major safety concerns.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has [laid out phases for vaccination](#), although each state can make its own rules and further define phases. Teens may qualify for vaccination in the next several months if they are employed as health care personnel or essential workers or have high-risk medical conditions.

The AAP recommends vaccination take place in the medical home when possible and says vaccines should not be withheld from adolescents who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Pediatricians also may be part of community vaccination efforts by opening their offices as vaccination sites for parents and the general public.

“Widespread administration of the vaccine is a huge step toward returning to ‘normal,’ a time when we can safely visit, share meals, play together and hug our grandchildren,” Dr. Beers said. “We talk about game-changers. The vaccine is a game-changer and we urge everyone who has the opportunity to get it to sign up now.”

The AAP continues to encourage vaccine manufacturers to include younger children in their trials to determine safety and efficacy. Pfizer recently announced it has fully enrolled a trial down to age 12, while [Moderna is enrolling adolescents ages 12-17](#).

“It is critical that pediatric patients of all ages be included in trials as quickly as possible,” Dr. Beers said. “We are especially concerned about children who belong to racial, ethnic, and cultural groups that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic or who have underlying conditions that place them at increased risk for developing severe COVID-19 infection.”

#### **Resources**

- [CDC guidance for health care providers on administering the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 vaccination communication toolkit](#)
- [AAP FAQ on COVID-19 vaccines](#)
- [AAP interim guidance on COVID-19](#)

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