

Donuts and hangouts: US kicks off Covid vaccination for teens

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Harrison Hunger, 14, received his COVID shot at a clinic in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, on Thursday and now has pastries on his mind.

Asked what he plans to do first, the teen doesn't skip a beat: "Probably go to Krispy Kreme, because they are offering free donuts to people with one of these," he says, showing off his [vaccine](#) card.

The campaign to immunize America's 17 million adolescents aged 12-to-15 kicked off in full force on Thursday, a key part of President Joe Biden's strategy to push the country toward herd immunity.

Across the country, kids lined up with their parents, eager to return to some semblance of their pre-pandemic lives.

"It will help me get back out more," said Daniel Fox, a 13-year-old among the first in the door when the Javits Center in New York City opened at 10 am. "Online playdates are pretty fun, but it's also fun to have an in-person playdate once in a while."

Fourteen-year-old twins Anaya and Jay Tsai also received their first doses.

"I've been very much looking forward to this day for a while. It's hugely important," said their mother Purva Tsai, 47.

"I hope it means things will start to get back to normal for the kids and they can socialize with their friends."

Numbers were a little low at a vaccine site set up at the Walter E Washington Convention Center in the US capital.

Kandall Frederick, 15, was driven in by her mom ahead of the school day.

"I was excited," she said. "I was the last one in the family to be vaccinated so now we will be all safe and sound, be on the go and do

things more freely."

Pizza and band

In Hartford, Connecticut, 13-year-old Charles Muro said he was looking forward to worrying less post-vaccination—and being able to grab some pizza.

"This will be the future," he said. "It feels revolutionary... it is pretty cool to be in this unique group."

And 14-year-old Sadie Sindland, who was also in Hartford, said she is ready to get back to school full-time, to play in a band and to see friends, despite some nervousness.

"I am always very scared of getting vaccines," Sadie said. "But I was really excited to get this COVID vaccine, because this is the first step to getting back to a normal society."

An April poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation that interviewed parents of 12-to-15-year-olds found that three in ten were keen to get their children vaccinated right away, a quarter will wait to see how it's working, a fifth will vaccinate only if their child's school requires it, and the remaining quarter will refuse the vaccine.

Teens are much less susceptible to COVID than older age groups, and the main reason to vaccinate them is to drive down overall transmission.

But extremely rare cases of severe COVID can still occur, as can a post-viral complication called multisystem inflammatory syndrome.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has called this week's authorization of the Pfizer COVID vaccine for youths aged 12 to 15 an

important tool for more schools to return to in-person learning this fall.

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