

Kids 5 and up get shots in tests for COVID vaccine

June 8 2021, by Stacey Plaisance



From left, 7-year-old Russell Bright, 5-year-old Tucker Bright, and dad Adam Bright pose for a picture at Ochsner Medical Center in Jefferson, La., Monday, June 7, 2021. Tests of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine started Monday in Louisiana for children ages 5 through 11. Credit: AP Photo/Stacey Plaisance

Seven-year-old Russell Bright squeezed his dad's hand tightly as tests of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine started Monday in Louisiana for children ages 5 through 11.

Children held stuffed animals, played under chairs and a few cried at Ochsner Medical Center, just outside New Orleans. Their temperature and blood pressure were checked, their noses swabbed and their blood drawn for tests. Finally, they got a shot of either the vaccine or a placebo.

Ochsner is among [98 facilities](#) in 26 states, the District of Columbia, Finland, Poland and Spain where the tests are taking place or planned.

Families won't know for six months whether their children actually were vaccinated. At that point, children who didn't get the vaccine will have the chance to do so.

The Pfizer vaccine was [approved](#) May 10 for children aged 12-15.

Adam Bright, whose younger son Tucker, 5, also is participating, said it was worth the chance to be a part of the trial.

"I want to do my part and have my kids do their part," he said. "Both me and my wife are already vaccinated, and so the sooner I can get them vaccinated and to feel comfortable being outside, not having to wear a mask, I thought the easiest way to get it is to go through the trial."

Russell, wearing a Spiderman mask, said he longs for a summer vacation that can include the water park or a longer trip—and then school without masks and social distancing.

"I'm looking forward to seeing my friends more and not wearing masks," he said. "You can't see if I'm making a frown or a smile. I don't like to wear them."

Five-year-old Kalil Chaudhry-Halperin held a stuffed toy Bruni—the lizard-like fire spirit in the movie *Frozen 2*—as he waited at Ochsner.

He was shy and a bit nervous, but his dad, Jason Halperin, says Kalil was excited, because he knows his parents and his 12-year-old sister have all been vaccinated.

"You know how much we've all been through, our entire community, but now we have safe, effective, life-saving vaccines, and it not only helps him but the entire community and anyone vulnerable around our family," Jason Halperin said. "That's a great lesson to impart to our children."

Adam Bright said he's confident the Pfizer vaccine is safe, especially after seeing how smoothly vaccinations seem to be going for the next age group up.

Russell said he hopes that if and when the vaccine is cleared for emergency use for kids his age, they'll take advantage of the chance.

"Be brave and do it," he said.

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Citation: Kids 5 and up get shots in tests for COVID vaccine (2021, June 8) retrieved 26 June

2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-06-kids-shots-covid-vaccine.html>

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