

Teens: You got your COVID vaccine, what now?

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(HealthDay)—U.S. teens are getting their COVID shots—how does that

change their daily lives?

Besides letting teens resume many of their normal activities, U.S. authorization of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for people as young as 12 is crucial to slowing the spread of the coronavirus, one expert says.

"We know that teenagers can not only get COVID-19 but they can also transmit the virus," said Dr. Jill Weatherhead of Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "While teenagers are less likely to have severe [disease](#) and require hospitalization, they can still get sick, develop long COVID symptoms and can transmit the virus to other people who are higher-risk."

She said it's important for teens to know about and be prepared for common post-vaccination side effects such as arm pain, muscle aches, fever and fatigue.

Full immunity is reached two weeks after the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Once teens are fully immunized, it's safer for them to attend in-person school events, play sports, hang out with friends and take part in other activities—especially if they're around others who also are fully vaccinated, according to Weatherhead, an assistant professor of pediatrics, tropical medicine and [infectious diseases](#).

"The vaccine offers an opportunity for adolescents to get back to a sense of normalcy in a safe way that keeps them from developing disease and transmitting it to other people," she said in a Baylor news release.

Weatherhead noted that U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for what fully vaccinated people can do apply to teens as well, which means they can more or less return to pre-pandemic behaviors.

Under CDC guidelines, fully vaccinated people can resume most normal activities without wearing a mask.

But there are exceptions. Even vaccinated people should wear a mask and maintain social distance in health care settings, when using public transportation or traveling on an airplane, and in [public spaces](#) or businesses that continue to require masks, Weatherhead said.

Even folks who are fully vaccinated may choose to take extra precautions.

"Some people might choose to continue to wear masks or continue to social distance until community transmission numbers come down," Weatherhead said. "It is up to the discretion of the family and their risk."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [COVID-19 vaccines and children/teens](#).

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