

Tips to help make getting a COVID-19 vaccine less scary for kids

November 8 2021, by Deedee Stiepan



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Families may be able to gather more safely now that the Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorization for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in children 5–11. Mayo Clinic and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices strongly recommend that children 5–11 be

vaccinated for COVID-19.

Dr. Robert M. Jacobson, a pediatrician and vaccine researcher with the Mayo Clinic Children's Center, offers a few tips on how to ease any fears or anxiety [young children](#) may have about getting vaccinated:

— Don't surprise [children](#) with vaccination.

Children should not first hear about the vaccination when they show up at a provider's office or a pharmacy. Usually, I recommend parents talk to their children in the days before that the vaccination comes up.

— Talk with children about the vaccine and answer their questions.

Explain to children that the pain of the injection will come and go, but the benefits will be long-lasting. Teach them that the [vaccine](#) teaches the body to defend against the germs and the harm they do.

If you or your children have a question that you're not handling well, that you're not getting the answers that you need, or your child is not understanding, consult your child's health care provider. He or she should be a part of your decision-making of how you pursue preventive care for you and your family. This is an important issue. We are suffering a pandemic right now. Your children, and their livelihoods, are at risk. So get that health care provider involved if you get stumped.

— Be a good example.

Be an example to your children by getting vaccinated, staying up to date on your vaccinations and sharing your experience with them. These are all things that you can do to prepare your children for getting vaccinated for COVID-19 and other vaccinations a child will be due for.

— Celebrate the vaccination.

Demonstrating appreciation for your child getting vaccinated goes a long way to reward a 5- to 11-year-old. You need to remember that developmentally these children are looking to demonstrate some mastery, to be grown up. Talking to them about how this is this a step of maturity, how this is grown up of them, this is mature — those are words that reward children 5-11 that they're doing the right thing.

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