Israel begins giving COVID shots to children age 5 to 11

November 23 2021

Israeli child Liam Lev Tov, 6, in the arms of his mother, receives a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from medical staff at Clalit Health services in Tel Aviv, Israel, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2021. Israel begins coronavirus vaccination campaign for children aged 5 to 11. Credit: AP Photo/Oded Balilty

Israel on Tuesday began administering the coronavirus vaccine to

children age 5 to 11.

The country recently emerged from a fourth COVID wave and daily infections have been relatively low for the last few weeks. But Health Ministry statistics show that a large share of the new infections have been in children and teenagers.

Children age 5 to 11 make up nearly half of active cases. Officials hope the new inoculation campaign will help bring down the numbers and perhaps stave off a new wave.

Israeli media reported low demand for the shots on the first day they were available to this age group. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett accompanied his son David, 9, on Tuesday to get his jab in a bid to encourage parents to have their children vaccinated.

Bennett held his son's hand as he received the shot. David Bennett said he was a little scared but the shot didn't hurt. The prime minister urged all eligible children to get vaccinated: "It protects our children and also parents," he said.

Israel, which has a population of more than 9 million, has had more than 1.3 million infections since the start of the pandemic and more than 8,100 deaths.

Israeli child Danae Vitkin, 9, receives her first Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from medical staff at Clalit Health services in Tel Aviv, Israel, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2021. Israel begins coronavirus vaccination campaign for children aged 5 to 11. Credit: AP Photo/Oded Balilty

Israeli child Rafael Peled, 8, looks through a VR virtual reality goggles as he receives a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from medical staff at the Sheba Tel Hashomer Hospital in Ramat Gan, Israel, Monday, Nov. 22, 2021. Israel has approved the coronavirus vaccine for children aged 5 to 11. Credit: AP Photo/Oded Balilty

Israeli girl Danae Vitkin, 9, receives her first Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from medical staff at Clalit Health services in Tel Aviv, Israel, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2021. Israel begins coronavirus vaccination campaign for children aged 5 to 11. Credit: AP Photo/Oded Balilty

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