

# Safety and side effects of COVID-19 vaccinations for kids

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With 28 million more children in the U.S. now eligible to be vaccinated for COVID-19, parents of kids 5-11 may still have questions about the vaccine and if it's safe for younger children. Dr. Tina Ardon, a Mayo

Clinic family medicine physician, says that it is safe to vaccinate children 5-11 for COVID-19.

"The COVID-19 vaccine is extremely safe for our [children](#). We have a number of studies that represent that we've had a number of children already received the vaccines, and we have been able to monitor those children closely. And we feel very confident this is a safe and effective vaccine," says Dr. Ardon.

Dr. Ardon, who is a mother of young children herself, says it's understandable that some parents may be wary of a vaccine that's been developed in a relatively short period of time, but they should not feel that it's any less safe because of that.

"I think it's important to remember we had a wealth of information about mRNA vaccines already under our belt before the pandemic started. So this helped speed up a lot of that initial research," she says.

"This is an example as well of how we get everybody, all hands on deck, everyone working as hard as they can to get a really important vaccine available for our patients. A lot of the bureaucratic red tape, some of the timelines that we normally see were just eliminated because we knew this was so important. The parts of the process that are truly important not to cut corners were certainly done exactly the way they needed to be. The timelines to administer the vaccines, to follow the [side effects](#) afterward, to analyze that data — all that was done extremely appropriately. There were no corners cut."

She says the COVID-19 vaccines are similar to other childhood vaccinations regarding how they are administered and the potential side effects.

"The COVID-19 vaccines, in a lot of ways, are no different than the other vaccines we have available. They're administered in the same way,

either in the arm or in the leg, depending on the age of the child. The doses are appropriate for the age of the child, as well. There's no special follow-up that has to happen after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. And the side effects are quite similar to other vaccines, including fever, muscle aches—but most likely pain, redness and swelling at the injection site," says Dr. Ardon.

A common question asked by parents is whether the risk of getting vaccinated for COVID-19 is higher than the [risk](#) of children getting infected with COVID-19.

"Because the vaccine is extremely safe, extremely effective, we do feel that the benefit greatly outweighs any potential risks of the [vaccine](#), which really, there are very minimal risks, if any. And the ones that we have noticed are things that we can take care of in the outpatient setting very easily," says Dr. Ardon. "The risks of actually getting COVID-19 for our patients are quite significant. We see things like inflammation of the heart, chronic lung problems. Patients may need to be hospitalized, and even can die from COVID-19 infection."

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