

Brazil regulator approves COVID vaccine for children

December 16 2021



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Brazil's health regulator approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine Thursday for use in children aged five to 11, joining a growing list of countries green-lighting vaccination for kids.

However, it is not clear when the hard-hit South American country will begin vaccinating children, if at all.

The matter now passes to the [health ministry](#), which will first have to decide whether to add COVID-19 vaccines for five- to 11-year-olds to the national immunization program and acquire child-size doses—one-third the adult dose.

"Collective vaccination reduces transmission of SARS-CoV-2 for this age group, and as a result, reduces transmission from children and adolescents to adults and the elderly," said Meiruze Freitas, director of Brazilian health regulator Anvisa, announcing the decision.

The pandemic has claimed more than 615,000 lives in Brazil, second only to the United States in absolute numbers.

However, cases and deaths have plunged as Brazil has scaled up vaccination. Currently, 66 percent of the country's 213 million people are fully vaccinated.

The massive immunization campaign comes despite anti-[vaccine](#) comments from far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who has joked the shot could "turn you into an alligator" and refused to be vaccinated himself.

With the world nervously watching the highly contagious new Omicron variant of the virus, Germany, Spain, Greece, Croatia and Hungary have all opened their vaccination drives to [younger children](#) recently.

Canada and the United States as well as Israel and Chile have also authorized shots for [children](#).

Citation: Brazil regulator approves COVID vaccine for children (2021, December 16) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-12-brazil-covid-vaccine-children.html>

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