

Guidelines for Dialogue

VACCINATION OF CHILDREN

Material for health workers

PAHO

Pan American
Health
Organization

World Health
Organization
Americas



This material provides recommended responses for addressing different COVID-19 topics during vaccination campaigns and informational activities, whether at a health facility or during home visits.

The aim of establishing an informed dialogue is to improve COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and administration rates. Therefore, whenever possible, an information session should be coupled with a vaccination session so individuals can act on the health expert's recommendations immediately.

The information published in these guidelines is based on data available through September 2022. Knowledge about the virus, the disease, and vaccination is constantly being updated and recommendations may change.

PAHO/FPL/IM/COVID-19/0037

© **Pan American Health Organization, 2022.**

Some rights reserved. This work is available under license [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/).

Should children and adolescents be vaccinated against COVID-19?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

The World Health Organization (WHO) currently recommends that countries offer vaccination (primary series and booster doses) to all persons 5 years of age and older if the vaccine is available and approved in their place of residence for their age.

3

The vaccine can prevent your child from becoming infected and passing on the virus that causes COVID-19. If a child is infected, the vaccine can prevent the disease from becoming severe. Vaccines are effective and protect us.

2

Children and adolescents can also become infected, get sick, and spread COVID-19, so it is very important that they receive the vaccine. The vaccine is safe and helps prevent disease.

4

These recommendations may change and the indications for your place of residence may vary, so pay attention to the media and official sources of information.

What vaccines are allowed for people under age 18?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

At the moment, the only WHO-approved vaccines are Pfizer's, for people 5 years and older, and Moderna's, for those 12 years and older. All others are approved only for people 18 years of age or older.

2

Each country has local health organizations and authorities that can decide which groups should receive the vaccine and which type of vaccines they purchase through direct contracts with pharmaceutical companies.

Children ages 5 to 11 should receive the pediatric version of the Pfizer vaccine, which is formulated and dosed differently from the adult version.



Can the vaccine cause my child to get COVID-19?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

No. **None of the vaccines contain the live virus**, so getting vaccinated can't give anyone COVID-19.

2

If any symptoms appear after a vaccine is given, there is a possibility that your child may already have had an asymptomatic or mild infection before the vaccine was administered.



Can the vaccine cause a reaction?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

Yes. It may cause some mild side effects, but **these are normal signs that the body is building protection**. We should not be alarmed. Vaccine side effects are to be expected. Remember that the vaccines have been declared safe after multiple and rigorous clinical trials.

2

Also tell them that they may experience pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where the vaccine was given. Effects may also include fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever or nausea, and general malaise. **The vast majority of these complaints are mild and disappear within a few days.**

3

After a person receives the vaccine, they will be observed for 15 to 30 minutes at the vaccination site to see if they have any allergic reactions that need to be treated. This precaution is followed for all vaccinated people, not just children.

4

Many people **don't feel any discomfort**, which doesn't mean the vaccine won't work.

Should I seek medical attention to treat any reactions my child may have?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

Most reactions are mild and can be treated at home with common pain relievers such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, if available. You may apply ice or cold water to the arm where the shot was given to reduce pain. These interventions relieve temporary pain but are not necessary for their well-being. These reactions usually resolve on their own after a few days and have no long-term effects.



2

In most cases, the discomfort will disappear within two days. It is not recommended to administer a pain reliever before vaccination to prevent side effects, but it may be appropriate after receiving the vaccine.

3

Seek medical advice if your child has difficulty breathing, severe allergies (rash), severe headache, or if the side effects concern you, are worsening, or do not seem to subside after a few days.



If my child gets the COVID-19 vaccine, can they be vaccinated against other diseases afterwards?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

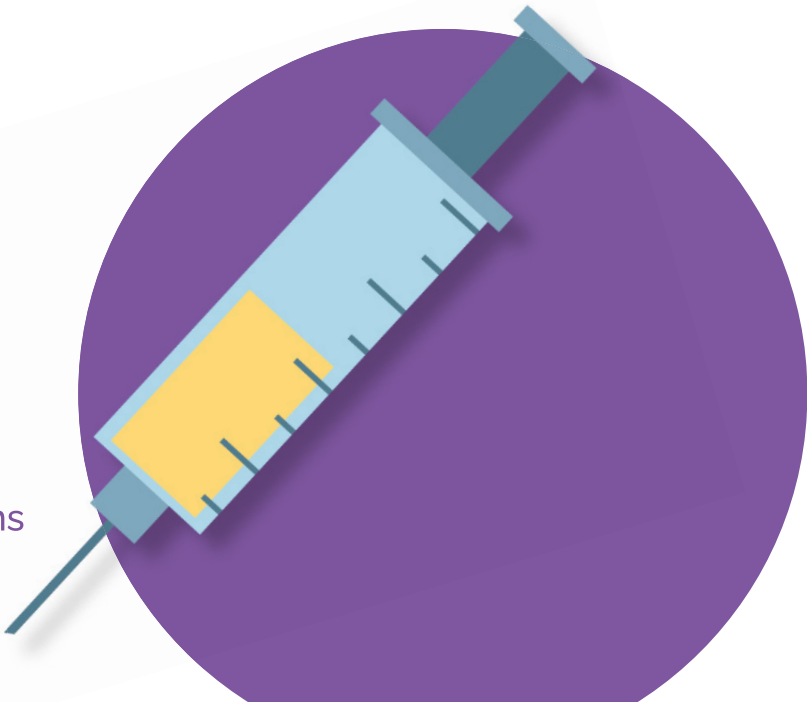
Yes. It is very important to follow the age-appropriate vaccination schedule. This will prevent them from getting other preventable diseases

3

All vaccines can be administered simultaneously with the COVID-19 vaccine.

2

Under no circumstances should you miss vaccinations against other diseases. You can go to the nearest health center or your regular health care provider. Do not delay vaccinations



If my child is underweight, should they be vaccinated?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

In the case of the Moderna vaccine, neither its dosage nor its composition changes according to the person (child, adolescent, or adult population). **There are no weight requirements to be vaccinated** against COVID-19 and the dose of this vaccine does not vary depending on the patient's weight.

3

People under the age of 18 can be vaccinated only with Pfizer or Moderna.

2

In the case of the Pfizer vaccine, the pediatric version is used only in children between 5 and 12 years of age. This version has a different dosage and composition from the adult version.

If the child has allergies, should he or she be vaccinated?

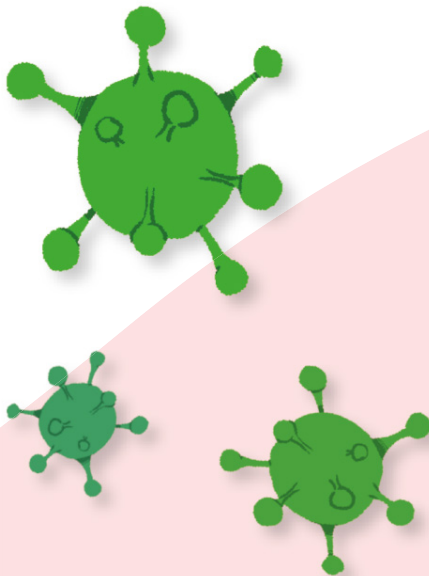
RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

If the child has any allergies, inform health personnel before vaccination. People with allergies to food, pets, poisons, environmental particles, or latex **can receive the vaccine.**

2

People with an allergy to oral medications or who have family members with a history of severe allergic reactions can also get vaccinated.



3

If the child had a severe or immediate allergic reaction after receiving the first dose of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, they should not receive the second dose from this laboratory. Your health care provider will suggest other types of vaccines to complete the series and ensure full protection.

4

If your child has had any immediate allergic reaction—even a mild one—to any vaccine or injectable treatment for another disease, consult your health care provider to weigh the risks and benefits of your child receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. After getting the vaccine, **they should remain under medical observation for 30 minutes** in a setting where any allergic reaction can be treated immediately.



Could the vaccine cause infertility in the child or adolescent population?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

No. There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems. No vaccine that could have such an effect would be approved by the WHO or any other health authority.

2

Studies show that the number of pregnancies is equal in vaccinated and unvaccinated women. **Women who became pregnant** during clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines did not experience negative effects and neither did their babies.

3

Some women have been reported to have experienced temporary changes in menstrual periods after having COVID-19 or after being vaccinated. More research is still needed to confirm this. **Remember that menstrual cycles can be affected by multiple causes**, including other infections, stress, sleep problems, and changes in diet or exercise.



Can the vaccine cause a sex change?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

No, the vaccine will not cause your son or daughter's sex to change.

If the child has already received the vaccine, should he or she continue to wear a mask?

11

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

Yes, it is important to continue the **prevention measures** we are already familiar with—hand hygiene, masks, and physical distancing—to minimize transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19. This additional protection reduces the risk of hospitalization and mortality throughout the community, not just at home.

2

Crowded and poorly ventilated places should be avoided. **Outdoor spaces are preferable.**

Once vaccinated, will children be able to resume their activities?

RESPONSE OPTIONS

1

After the COVID-19 vaccination schedule is completed, **it will be safer for the child to resume activities they have been unable to do** during the pandemic; however, they could still get sick with COVID-19 if different strains appear.

3

A person is considered **fully vaccinated two weeks after the second dose.**

2

It usually takes two weeks after vaccination for the body to build up protection (immunity) against the virus.

This means it's possible your child could get COVID-19 immediately before or right after getting vaccinated and get sick because the vaccine didn't have enough time to offer protection.

This material has been prepared based on documents from the Ministry of Health of Guatemala and with the support of the PAHO Country Office in Guatemala.

