

**Youth Vaccinations - Frequently Asked Questions November 2021**

- **Will the COVID-19 vaccination be required to attend school? If so, will there be exemptions?**
  - There is not currently a mandate for students to receive a COVID-19 vaccine to attend school. In October, the Governor of California announced a student vaccination mandate may go into effect for both public and private school students once the vaccine is fully authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for each respective age group. Exemptions for student COVID-19 vaccines are not yet applicable because the proposed mandate has not yet taken effect. If and when the mandate goes into effect, there will be additional information on how it will be implemented and what exemptions may be applicable.
  
- **Why should children receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**
  - Children can get sick from COVID-19. Some children get rare but severe complications from the COVID-19 virus. The vaccine is the best protection against severe illness from the virus. A child can also spread COVID-19 to other people even if that child does not have symptoms. The vaccine is the best prevention to spreading the virus to others. Additionally vaccinated children will be able to participate in more activities and attend more events.
  
- **What is the difference in dosage for children ages 5 to 11 and children over the age of 12?**
  - The Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 is a smaller dose than the dose given to children over the age of 12 and adults. It is one-third of an adult dose. Although the dosage is different, just like adults, children need two doses of the vaccine, three weeks apart
  
- **If a child is about to turn age 12, is it better to wait to get the higher dose or get them vaccinated now with the lower dosage?**
  - Healthcare professionals have emphasized the importance of receiving the vaccine as soon as possible to reduce the risk of severe illness, regardless of the dosage provided. Doctors have said that the reduced

dosage has proven to still be highly effective and parents/guardians should not delay getting their children vaccinated because they are waiting for a higher dosage.

- **Once children are vaccinated, will they still have to wear a mask at school?**
  - Universal masking in schools is a requirement set forth by the California Public Health Department as a strategy to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on school campuses. The CDPH announced they will be revisiting mask requirements in Winter 2021.
  
- **Where can families find information on available vaccine clinics in their community?**
  - Additional information on the COVID-19 vaccine and available vaccine clinics can be found at [sccfreevax.org](https://sccfreevax.org) No appointment necessary and vaccines will be available regardless of immigration status. Your child's health care specialist or pediatrician may also have the vaccine available.
  
- **What are the potential side effects for the vaccine in children? Are the side effects more severe for children?**
  - The majority of the children ages 5 to 11 in the COVID-19 vaccine trials displayed arm tenderness or swelling at the injection site where they received the vaccine. This side effect is very common for various types of vaccines. There were also patients who displayed symptoms including a mild fever, headache or nausea after receiving the vaccine. There were no serious adverse reactions documented during the trial for 5 to 11 year olds. The percentage of patients in the 5 to 11 age group trial who had any of the documented mild symptoms was lower than in the 12 to 16 age group trial. Source:
  
- **If a child has an underlying health condition, should they still get vaccinated?**
  - Families should consult with their child's health care specialist or pediatrician to determine what may be best for each individual child's needs. Health care professionals have emphasized that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective for children in reducing the risk for severe illness from the virus. Children with compromised immune systems or underlying health conditions are at higher risk of having complications from the COVID-19 if they are not immunized.

- **If my child feels ill after receiving the vaccine, should they stay home from school?**
  - If your child has fever, headache, chills, or body aches soon after vaccination, they should stay home. If they are better within 48 hours, your child can go back to school. If they still feel sick longer than 48 hours, keep your child at home and talk to your child's doctor to make sure they don't have COVID-19 or another infection. Please remember, the vaccine can't give your child COVID, but they could have been infected just before getting vaccinated.
  
- **Are COVID-19 vaccines linked to heart health problems?**
  - Heart health problems are very rare. Symptoms are usually mild and can be treated. COVID-19 disease causes more serious health problems than the vaccine. The vaccine is the best protection against COVID-19 heart health problems.
  
- **Does the vaccine affect fertility or puberty?**
  - No. There is no documented effect on female or male fertility or puberty from the vaccine.