Vaccination for Children and Adolescents:
Considerations

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Introduction

A COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for children aged 6 months and older.

As a parent or guardian, you want to protect your child from harm. Your child likely already received vaccinations to protect them from many dangerous illnesses such as chickenpox, polio, and whooping cough. The benefits of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine outweigh any known or potential risks of vaccination. In addition to gaining their own immunity, children who are fully vaccinated protect their siblings, grandparents, guardians, and classmates. **You** have the power to protect them from COVID-19!

Safety First

Of course, your number one priority as a parent or guardian is to keep your child safe. Below is some important information to help you make a decision about vaccinating your child.

- **COVID-19 can affect children**—Although fewer children than adults have been infected with COVID-19, it can cause severe illness in children and adolescents. Children can also spread COVID-19 to others. The hospitalization rate of unvaccinated adolescents from COVID-19 is ten times higher than that of fully vaccinated adolescents.
- **The COVID-19 vaccine is safe**—COVID-19 vaccines are held to the same safety standards as other vaccines that many people receive like the chickenpox (varicella) vaccine and the flu (influenza) vaccine. COVID-19 vaccines have been subject to the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history, which includes studies in adolescents and children aged 6 months and older. Your child cannot get COVID-19 from any COVID-19 vaccine.
- **The COVID-19 vaccine does not affect fertility**—Some parents are concerned that the COVID-19 vaccine will harm their children's ability to have their own kids in the future. There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccination has any impact on fertility.

Post-Vaccination

Parents may wonder how their children will feel after they receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Two common concerns parents have raised include:

- **Common side effects**—The side effects for children receiving the vaccine are similar to those for adults. Some people feel pain, redness, or swelling in their arms. Others may also feel drowsiness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, or nausea.
- **Adolescents and myocarditis**—There have been rare cases of myocarditis and pericarditis reported in adolescents and young adults, mostly males, after getting an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna). These cases have mostly been mild and resolved quickly. The risk of developing myocarditis is 37 times more likely for children who contract COVID-19 than those who receive the vaccine.

The known risks of COVID-19 illness and the possible severe complications, such as long-term health problems, hospitalization, and even death, far outweigh the potential risks of having a rare adverse reaction to vaccination.[1]

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[1] https://www.aappublications.org/news/2021/08/31/covid-myocarditis-risk-children-083121