# Virginia Department of HealthPfizer-BioNTech (5 to 11 Years-Old) COVID-19 VaccineFrequently Asked Questions for Schools

1. What do I need to do for my child to get the shot?

Parents can reach out to their child’s healthcare provider or find an appointment at [**Vaccinate Virginia**](http://vaccinate.virginia.gov/). Many healthcare providers are enrolled and have vaccines, but some are not. You can find other locations such as retail pharmacies, community events, and community vaccination centers at the Vaccinate Virginia website.

1. Does my child have to receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

No.

1. I don’t have insurance. Do I have to pay for my child to receive a vaccine?

No. All COVID-19 vaccines are free to anyone. There is no out-of-pocket expense to the patient or parent.

1. I can’t be there on the day my child is getting a vaccine. Will they still be able to get it?

It may depend on the school. If your child’s school is holding a school-vaccine clinic where the student gets vaccinated while in school, the consent of the parent is acquired beforehand. The parent does not need to be present with the student during a school-vaccine clinic. If, as a parent, you want to accompany your child while they are vaccinated and the school will not allow this, you can find other opportunities for vaccination at the Vaccinate Virginia website. These opportunities include your child’s healthcare provider, a retail pharmacy, or a community vaccination center.

1. Can I come to the school on the day my child receives their vaccine?

It may depend on the school. If your child’s school is holding a school-vaccine clinic where the student gets vaccinated while in school, the consent of the parent is acquired beforehand. The parent does not need to be present with the student during a school-vaccine clinic. If, as a parent, you want to accompany your child while they are vaccinated and the school will not allow this, you can find other opportunities for vaccination at the Vaccinate Virginia website.

These opportunities include your child’s healthcare provider, a retail pharmacy, or a community vaccination center.

1. What will happen if my child is uncooperative?

Children, especially younger children, may need to be held in order for clinicians to easily administer the vaccine. During a school-vaccine clinic, staff designated to comfort children will utilize the Centers for Disease Control (CDC’s) Fact Sheet on [How to Hold Your Child During Vaccination](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/holds-factsheet.html). Under no circumstances will staff deviate from the comfort holds recommended by the CDC. Some children may not be able to be coaxed into allowing vaccination. It may be helpful to contact the parent to speak with the child or to invite the parent to come to the school to hold their child. The parent may decide for the child to be vaccinated at another time and location.

1. How many vaccines does my child need?

The Pfizer-BioNTech (5 to 11 years-old) vaccine requires two doses, 21 days apart. The second dose does not have to fall directly 21 days apart but should be as close to the 21-day interval as possible. The second dose should be administered no later than 42 days after the first dose.

1. What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Commonly reported side effects in the clinical trial included injection site pain (sore arm), redness and swelling, fatigue, headache, muscle and/or joint pain, chills, fever, swollen lymph nodes, nausea, and decreased appetite. More children reported side effects after the second dose than after the first dose. Side effects were generally mild to moderate in severity and occurred within two days after vaccination, and most went away within one to two days.

1. What can I expect after my child gets the vaccine? How will they feel?

Commonly reported side effects in the clinical trial included injection site pain (sore arm), redness and swelling, fatigue, headache, muscle and/or joint pain, chills, fever, swollen lymph nodes, nausea, and decreased appetite. More children reported side effects after the second dose than after the first dose. Side effects were generally mild to moderate in severity and occurred within two days after vaccination, and most went away within one to two days.

1. Can my child stop wearing a mask once they are vaccinated?

A [Public Health Order](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/PHE-Order_K-12-8-12-2021.pdf) requires all individuals, aged two years and older, to wear masks when indoors at public and private K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. The Order also applies to Pre-K if the program is at a K-12 school. In [areas of substantial or high transmission](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/see-the-numbers/covid-19-in-virginia/community-transmission/), the VDH and CDC recommend that all persons wear a mask in indoor public settings, regardless of their vaccination status.

1. Which COVID-19 vaccine will my child get?

The only COVID-19 vaccine recommended for children 5 to 11 years-old is the Pfizer-BioNTech (5 to 11 years-old). If your child is 12 to 18 years-old, they will get the Pfizer-BioNTech (12+) vaccine. These two vaccines have different dosage sizes and different mixing, storage, and handling requirements. The active ingredients, however, remain the same.

1. Can my child get the flu vaccine when (s)he gets the COVID-19 vaccine at school?

Yes. The flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine can be administered at the same time, or at any interval from each other. For example, your child can get the flu vaccine on Wednesday, and then get the COVID-19 vaccine the following Saturday.

1. How can I find out if my child’s school is providing the COVID-19 vaccine?

Schools are working directly with health departments and healthcare providers in their communities to determine the best way to ensure their students have access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Ask your child’s school if they are planning a vaccination event.

1. Can my other children get vaccinated at the COVID-19 vaccine clinic being held at my child’s school?

If the vaccine clinic being held at your child’s school is intended only for the students at the school, then only those students will be able to attend. Parents will provide consent prior to the clinic and may not be able to attend in person with the student. If, however, the school is being used as a community vaccination event, non-students may also be able to get vaccinated. Schools are working directly with health departments and healthcare providers in their communities to determine the best way to ensure their students have access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Ask your child’s school if they are planning a vaccination event.

1. Will school nurses be responsible for administering COVID-19 vaccines?

Schools are working directly with health departments and healthcare providers in their communities to determine the best way to ensure their students have access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Ask your school if they are planning a vaccination event and how school personnel will be involved.

1. Is it mandatory for school divisions to host vaccine clinics in schools?

No.