

When will children be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

15 March 2021, by Dr. James D. Campbell, American Academy Of Pediatrics



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Q: When will a COVID-19 vaccine be available for children?

A: With vaccines now being administered to protect against COVID-19, we've made a big step toward slowing down the virus that causes this deadly disease. The first vaccines released are authorized for use in adults and teens who are at least 16 years old.

High-risk groups such as front-line workers and [elderly people](#) are first in line to receive the vaccines, with other adults and teens likely to have access later this spring.

Research shows these new vaccines to be remarkably effective and safe. The American Academy of Pediatrics urges older teens and adults to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available to them.

Before COVID-19 vaccines become available for younger teens and children, [clinical trials](#) need to be completed. This is to ensure the vaccines are safe and effective for these age groups. Children

are not little adults; we can't just assume a vaccine will have the same effect on a child as it does on someone older.

While there are current studies that include children as young as 12, it is critical that children of all ages be included in more trials as quickly as possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a terrible toll on children's lives. We need more data on vaccines for children so they can be protected from this virus and the pandemic can be controlled. Once this information is available, the AAP will review it and make vaccine recommendations for children and adolescents.

The timing of vaccine availability will depend on the results of the trials of the vaccine in adolescents and children that are planned or under way now. But based on the current pace of research, it may be possible to have a vaccine for at least some age groups of children and adolescents before the 2021-22 [school year](#) begins.

Once a vaccine is shown to be safe and effective in children, [health authorities](#), including the CDC and the AAP, will recommend when and how children should receive the [vaccine](#). However, it is a state government decision which vaccines are required for school entry. Those decisions could vary by state.

In the meantime, ensure your children are up to date on their vaccinations against measles, influenza, whooping cough, and any others that your pediatrician recommends. Falling vaccination rates can lead to new outbreaks of dangerous diseases. And that's the last thing anyone needs on top of COVID-19.

I look forward to the day when all [children](#) are safely able to spend time with their friends, travel with their families, and enjoy their communities, thanks to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines

and other measures that reduce transmission of the virus.

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