

FDA may allow Pfizer boosters for 12- to 15-year-olds by Monday

30 December 2021



Younger adolescents may soon be eligible for COVID-19 booster vaccines, possibly by early next week.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is planning on Monday to broaden [booster](#) eligibility to include 12- to 15-year-olds, sources told *The New York Times*. This would be for the Pfizer-BioNTech shot, currently the only COVID-19 vaccine approved for this age group.

The FDA is also expected to reduce the amount of time that adolescents and adults must wait between their second dose of the shot and their booster dose to five months, down from the current six months.

The regulators are also expected to authorize a booster for a select group of younger children, those ages 5 to 11, who have immune deficiencies and are therefore more vulnerable to COVID-19.

After the FDA makes its decisions, the U.S.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [vaccine](#) advisory committee will meet to vote on whether to recommend the changes, according to the *Times*. That's likely to happen by the middle of next week, followed by what would be expected to be a quick endorsement by CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky.

While children are believed to better tolerate infection with COVID-19, in rare cases they can become severely ill and die. As well, the highly contagious Omicron variant of COVID is infecting record numbers of Americans now, putting pressure on hospitals that are already caring for patients infected with the Delta variant, the *Times* noted.

Pfizer boosters are currently authorized for people ages 16 and up. The two other COVID vaccines, from Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, are authorized for adults 18 and up.

About 70% of Americans ages 12 and older are now fully vaccinated, according to the CDC, but about 1.8 million adolescents in the 12- to 15-year-old demographic have already tested positive for the virus.

More information: The World Health Organization has [more on COVID-19](#).

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