

Encourage COVID-19 Vaccination for Adolescents

You'll hear questions about **giving COVID-19 vaccines to kids**...now that Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine is authorized down to age 12.

Vaccination is critical for kids...even though most children who get COVID-19 don't get severe symptoms. About 1 in 3 kids hospitalized for COVID-19 end up in the ICU.

Plus kids can also have "long-haul" symptoms (fatigue, etc) that last for months...or serious complications, such as inflammation in the heart, kidneys, or lungs.

Encourage COVID-19 vaccination for adolescents age 12 to 15.

Get your pharmacist involved to share benefits with parents and adolescents...and address misconceptions.

For example, vaccinating children may also help protect others...such as elderly grandparents or immunocompromised friends or family.

And vaccinated kids won't need to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19.

Your pharmacist can clarify that COVID-19 vaccines DON'T affect DNA...and that there's no evidence that ANY vaccine leads to infertility. And people who get COVID-19 vaccines CAN'T "shed" the virus to others.

Keep in mind, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is currently the only option for patients 12 to 15. Stay tuned for data with Moderna in kids soon...and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen later this year.

Give kids 12 to 15 the same dose of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine as other patients... 0.3 mL IM into the deltoid, with a second dose 3 weeks later.

Anticipate Pfizer-BioNTech kits will come with 1-inch needles...which can be used for most adolescents. If a 5/8-inch needle is used for smaller kids, make sure to stretch the skin tightly if you're injecting.

Help calm fears if patients are nervous. Use distractions, such as asking about hobbies...or letting them listen to music on a smartphone.

Be aware, patients should stay seated for at least 15 minutes after vaccination. Fainting is more common in adolescents after any vaccine.

Work with your pharmacist to identify if kids need other routine or catch-up immunizations. CDC now says that COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines CAN be given at the same visit...in kids or adults.

Consider our Pharmacy Technicians University's PTU Elite: Immunizations training program to master the skills needed to successfully administer vaccines to children and adults.

And access our chart, COVID-19 Vaccines, for updated storage requirements, safety and efficacy data, and more.

Key References:

- MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2021;70(20):749-52
- www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html (5-24-21)
- www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-authorizes-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-use (5-24-21)
- www.fda.gov/media/144413/download (5-24-21)

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