

Pfizer Covid 19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions:

Who can get covid vaccine at Pediatrics of Northeastern PA?

Any Pennsylvania resident is eligible to receive covid vaccine through our office (you do not need to be an existing patient, nor do you need to be a child or adolescent). For the purposes of covid vaccine, we are open to everyone to do our part to end the pandemic.

How much does it cost?

Nothing. There is no charge to any patient to receive the vaccine in our office. The vaccine has been paid for by the US government. We will ask for insurance information so that we can bill your insurance the vaccine administration fee, but even if you have no insurance, you can still receive the vaccine with no cost to you (the Department of Health and Human Services will cover the cost in these instances). All billing of insurance or the DHHS is done in accordance with federal and state guidelines.

Does my doctor recommend I get vaccinated against covid?

If you are a patient of Pediatrics of Northeastern PA, the answer is absolutely, "YES!" (The answer is likely "Yes" regardless of who your doctor is, but we obviously cannot speak for all doctors). All of our physicians (and the overwhelming majority of our staff) have been vaccinated at this point. Eligible members of our families (spouses and children) have also been vaccinated if they are old enough and all or our providers plan to get our younger children vaccinated as soon as a vaccine is approved to do so.

How old to I have to be to get the vaccine?

Pfizer's vaccine is currently authorized for patients 16 and older. We expect it to be authorized for patients 12 and older in the near future.

Why should I get my child vaccinated?

Although COVID infections are usually mild in children, serious symptoms causing hospitalization or even death may occur. Nationwide, at least 250 children have died from covid (not all states report data by age, so the exact number is unknown). This is roughly double the number of children that die from flu in a typical year and long-term consequences of having covid remain unknown. Children or adolescents who become infected with COVID also run the risk of passing that infection on to high-risk individuals. For these reasons our practice recommends receiving the vaccine as soon as it is approved for your child.

Does the vaccine work?

Hundreds of millions of doses have already been administered worldwide and it has been shown to be 95% effective at preventing infection and even more effective than that at preventing hospitalizations and deaths.

Wasn't the vaccine rushed through the approval process?

Although the vaccine was developed quicker than any vaccine in history, no steps in the normal process were skipped. The accelerated pace was possible due to government funding (securing funding typically takes years but instead was available almost immediately) and the rapid pace of volunteers signing up for the study (this also normally takes years, but instead the studies filled up completely within 2-3 weeks). No short cuts were taken and the standard review processes remained in place.

What side effects can I expect?

Side effects vary from person to person with some people experiencing no side effects and others having symptoms such as arm soreness, fever, and flu like symptoms. When side effects do occur, they are usually lasting less than 24 hrs.

What about blood clots associated with some vaccines?

Rare cases of blood clots have been reported with 2 other covid vaccines. Specifically, these cases have occurred in rare instances with vaccines developed by Johnson & Johnson, and by Astra-Zeneca. The Pfizer (and Moderna) vaccine uses a different technology and no issues with blood clots have been reported with these vaccines. Covid disease has a 16% chance of developing blood clots according to some data so even with the vaccines that have been linked to clots, the risk of clots is MUCH greater from covid than it is from any vaccine.

I read on the internet that the vaccine can cause infertility in girls.

Unfortunately, inaccurate information on vaccines of all kinds is easy to find on the internet. There is no scientific evidence that the vaccine causes infertility. Hundreds of millions of doses have already been given worldwide, many in women of child-bearing age, and there have been no reports of fertility issues following vaccination.

If I get the vaccine, will I then automatically test positive for covid if I need to get tested?

The vaccine will not affect the results of Covid testing should you become ill and require a test.

Can I get covid from the vaccine?

You cannot get COVID from the vaccine as it does not contain any actual virus.

How long does it take for me to be fully vaccinated?

Pfizer's vaccine is given in 2 doses spaced 3 weeks apart. You are considered fully vaccinated 14 days after your second dose.