



# COVID-19 Vaccines Safety Facts for Providers

## California Chapter 2

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## Are Children's COVID-19 Vaccines Safe?

- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. They have been evaluated in tens of thousands of participants in Phase 3 clinical trials and have met the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality.
- Since then, about 600 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the United States, with 17 million doses given to adolescents and more than 10 million doses given to children 5-11 years.<sup>1</sup> As of August 21, 2022, over 1.5 million COVID vaccine doses have been administered to children **under age 5** in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Although millions of people have received the COVID-19 vaccines, no unexpected, long-term side effects have been detected.<sup>3</sup>
- Non-serious side effects from the vaccines do occur but are self-limited.
- Overall risk for myocarditis or pericarditis following COVID-19 vaccination is present, but rare. Myocarditis or pericarditis rates were 9.1 and 66.7 per million second doses of mRNA vaccine administered to 12-17 year old females and males, respectively.<sup>4</sup> The rates were even lower for younger children, ages 5-11 years, with male rates at 15.2 and female rates at 0.<sup>5</sup>
- Among children under age 5, there have been no cases of myocarditis reported as of August 21, 2022.<sup>2</sup> The risk of cardiac complications from the vaccine is lower than the risk of cardiac complications from COVID-19 infection, in all age groups.<sup>6</sup>
- The risk of myocarditis and pericarditis could be decreased further by increasing the time interval between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> mRNA primary vaccine doses to **8 weeks** among immunocompetent patients. This is especially important for males between ages 5-17 years.<sup>5</sup>
- The benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks of the COVID vaccines. The CDC and the FDA also continue to closely monitor vaccination outcomes for safety.
- As COVID-19 infections spread in our communities, mutations and new variants of the virus will continue to occur. The best way to prevent community spread of COVID-19, including its more contagious variants, is for everyone, including children, to stay up to date with their vaccines and boosters when eligible.
- COVID-19 infections in unvaccinated children and adolescents can lead to severe outcomes, including increased hospitalizations, MIS-C, long COVID-19, and death, even when there are no underlying medical conditions. Vaccinating children is an important step to reducing these risks.<sup>7</sup>





<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID Data Tracker. [covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations\\_vacc-total-admin-rate-total](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations_vacc-total-admin-rate-total).

<sup>2</sup> T. Shimabukuro. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ACIP Presentation Slides: September 1, 2022. [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2022-09-01/05-COVID-Shimabukuro-508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2022-09-01/05-COVID-Shimabukuro-508.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Safety of COVID-19 vaccines. [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html).

<sup>4</sup> Bozkurt, B., Kamat, I., & Hotez, P.J. (2021). Myocarditis with COVID-19 mRNA vaccines. *American Heart Association*, 144(6), 471-484. [www.ahajournals.org/doi/epub/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.121.056135](https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/epub/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.121.056135).

<sup>5</sup> T. Shimabukuro. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ACIP Presentation Slides: June 23, 2022. [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2022-06-22-23/03-COVID-Shimabukuro-508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2022-06-22-23/03-COVID-Shimabukuro-508.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Block, J.P. *et al.* (2022). Cardiac complications after SARS-CoV-2 infection and mRNA COVID-19 vaccination — PCORnet, United States, January 2021–January 2022. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 71(14), 517-523. [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7114e1.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7114e1.htm).

<sup>7</sup> Marks, K.J. *et al.* (2022). Hospitalizations of children and adolescents with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 — COVID-NET, 14 states, July 2021–January 2022. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 71(7), 271–278. [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/pdfs/mm7107e4-H.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/pdfs/mm7107e4-H.pdf).

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