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### **COVID-19 Pediatric Vaccine Interview.**

**Dr. Sara Goza, Prediatrician, past President American Academy of Pediatrics.**

#### **1. Is the vaccine safe?**

The COVID vaccine is safe. The vaccine went through the same trials any other vaccine or medication goes through before FDA approval. Vaccine side effects occur within the first 6 weeks after someone gets the vaccine so we have a lot of data now about the COVID vaccine in millions of Americans. There is also post licensure surveillance of all vaccines that continues to monitor for issues with safety.

#### **2. Are COVID vaccine side effects the same in children?.**

Yes, children can experience the same side effects as adults with the vaccine. These include soreness in the arm, fever, achiness and fatigue. Like in adults these symptoms are short lived. There has been the very rare case of myocarditis following the second dose of the mRNA vaccines in older adolescents and young adults (mostly males). This is extremely rare and usually very mild. The AAP has information about this on [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org). The pediatric cardiologists who care for these children as well as for children who get myocarditis from COVID illness have stated that the risk of myocarditis from COVID disease (even mild disease) is much higher and the severity is worse than the very rare incidence associated with the vaccine.

#### **3. Should parents consider getting a child vaccinated for COVID-19?**

Yes. As I have said many times low risk is not no risk. Children do get COVID, and some get very sick. Over 6.6 million children have had test proven COVID infection. We have had thousands of hospitalizations and over 700 deaths in children. We have seen cases of Multi Inflammatory Syndrome cases (MISC) where children end up very ill and most in the ICU that occurs about 3 weeks after having COVID itself and many times asymptomatic infections. Children suffer in other ways from COVID 19 as well. This includes disruptions to education, harms to mental and emotional health and diminished access to critical medical services. Vaccinating our children will protect their health but will also allow them to get back to doing the things they love.....sports/clubs/visiting friends and relatives. Vaccines have the power to stop epidemics. Children make up a significant portion of this country and vaccinating our children is part of the strategy to control this virus.

#### **4. Are there specific concerns for kids getting COVID vaccines?**

The testing required by the FDA for the COVID vaccine is the same as it has been for other vaccines and medications yet parents have questions about how this vaccine was made and tested and became available so quickly. Pediatricians are happy to answer these questions for parents. We want to make sure parents understand how this vaccine was made and how it works. I recommend [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) as a good resource to do their research and if there more questions to call their pediatrician or trusted medical source. I love the dancing band aid videos for the children to explain how the vaccine was made and how it works. The risk of long-term side effects is something I get asked frequently and as I said in earlier question in the

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history of vaccines there have been no side effects that were identified after 6 to 8 weeks after the vaccine was given. We now have over 12 months of data on the safety of this vaccine.

#### **5. Does the vaccine affect fertility?**

There has been a lot of worry about effects on fertility from this vaccine. The experts have stated that there is no effect on fertility from this vaccine. For more information you can go to [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) where this is discussed,

#### **6. Does going to school increase child's risk of catching or transmitting the coronavirus?**

Any contact with other people can increase your risk of getting COVID19. Children spend a good part of their day in school and children can get and spread COVID so it is a risk, but it can be mitigated. Public health measures such as staying home if sick, wearing masks, and encouraging physical distancing are still critical to stop the spread until we can get high enough vaccination rates and low public spread. Vaccinating our children will help us get the COVID 19 virus under control.

#### **7. Would getting the COVID-19 vaccination protect parents if child gets COVID-19?**

Vaccination does protect parents and children from getting COVID, but it is not 100%. No vaccine has 100% efficacy and that is why it is so important to get as many people vaccinated as possible. We do know that being vaccinated protects from serious illness, hospitalization and death from this virus.

#### **8. What are the benefits of getting a child vaccinated?**

Getting your child vaccinated does many things. It protects your child from the disease and as we have said some children do get very sick from this and we are now seeing children have long term effects from having the virus. It also allows children to get back to their activities and decrease the risk to other children and adults. It protects the extended family and friends and community.

#### **9. If a child is turning 12 in a couple of months. Should parents wait for the larger 12+ dose?**

No. The dose is based on age and there is no benefit to delaying the first dose. We want to protect our children as soon as we can and give them the chance to be protected from this virus.

#### **10. Why do kids need the vaccine if they do not get as sick as adults?**

As I said before low risk is not no risk. Some children get sick, and some get very sick. We have had over 700 children die from this illness. It ranks in the top 10 causes of death in children in 2020. We are also just starting to get data about long haul or long-term effects in children. Some studies are estimating 1 in 6 children suffer long term effects from the viral infection even just mild infections. These effects include anxiety, depression, brain fog, fatigue, exercise intolerance, loss of taste and smell, and lung and cardiac complications to name a few. We have a safe and effective vaccine to prevent this and we encourage

parents to get their children vaccinated and if they have hesitation to reach out to their trusted medical sources and discuss their concerns.