

Updated 1-10-22



## Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

As of January 3, 2022, the COVID-19 vaccine authorization and recommendations were updated by the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and are included in this guidance.

Every Texan 5 years of age and older is eligible to receive a free COVID-19 vaccine, including youth in conservatorship. Vaccine supply has improved and is readily available throughout Texas. The pediatric vaccine, for youth in the 5 to 11 year-old age group, comes in a different formulation from the vaccine approved for adults, so it is important to seek out providers who have received the pediatric vaccine when getting children in this age group vaccinated. At this time, only the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is authorized for children and teens.

A **booster** dose is not authorized for children 5 to 11 years of age at this time. Moderately or severely immunocompromised children 5 to 11 years of age are now recommended to receive an **additional** dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine 28 days after their second dose. To determine if a child in conservatorship qualifies as having a moderately or severely immunocompromised condition, please follow the guidance of the child's health care provider. Examples provided by the CDC of a child that is moderately or severely immunocompromised condition include a child with a solid organ transplant or a child with a primary immunodeficiency. Children receiving complex case management services by STAR Health will receive outreach from STAR Health if they have a qualifying diagnosis.

Adolescents 12 to 17 years of age are recommended to receive a single booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Individuals 12 years and older who received the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine as their primary series can now receive a single booster dose **5 months** after completing the primary series.

Through a variety of mechanisms, the U.S. vaccine safety monitoring system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Safety has been a top priority while federal partners worked to make the COVID-19 vaccines available. The COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for anyone who is eligible to receive it. Unlike other routine vaccines, the COVID vaccine is currently authorized by the FDA for emergency use authorization, which means getting it is voluntary and the youth should agree (if able) in addition to the medical consentor.

Caseworkers will notify parents of children in conservatorship whose parental rights have NOT been terminated so that the parent has an opportunity to object. DFPS staff should support youth who expressly want the vaccine by providing consent by the medical consentor or a back-up medical consentor, assuming there is no known parental objection. Medical consentors should confirm with caseworkers that parental notification has occurred prior to taking a youth for the COVID-19 vaccine.

At this time, there is only one vaccine that is approved by the FDA beyond emergency use authorization for the prevention of COVID-19 – and that is the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (brand name *Comirnaty*) – but the approval is only for use in individuals 16 years of age and older.

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Only the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is authorized for people 5 to 17 years of age. The pediatric version of the vaccine, for children 5 to 11 years of age, has a reduced dosage, still provided in an initial and second dose.

Youth and caregivers should contact providers in their area to ensure they are offering the appropriate vaccine before making an appointment or attending a walk-up vaccine clinic. Primary care providers may be administering the vaccine in their offices so caregivers should check with a youth's medical provider to see if that is an option. Otherwise, tools for locating vaccine providers are available at [covidvaccine.texas.gov](https://covidvaccine.texas.gov) or [vacunacovid.texas.gov](https://vacunacovid.texas.gov). Remember, the ability to get a vaccine soon will depend on vaccine availability at the vaccine provider facility. Please call ahead to the provider as an appointment may be necessary. The vaccine administration will be covered under a youth's STAR Health Medicaid coverage and STAR Health can also assist in finding a location. Do not show up at a vaccine hub, medical provider's office or pharmacy without first signing up or checking the provider's instructions for scheduling.

**Additional resources:**

STAR Health Member Services: 1-866-912-6283

[COVID-19 Vaccine Information/DSHS](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)

[CDC - Vaccine Safety](#)