

## **COVID Vaccine FAQs**

### **Q: Which youth are currently eligible to receive the COVID Vaccine?**

A: As of January 3, 2022, all youth aged 5+ are eligible for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, and all adults (18+) can receive any vaccine.

Children 5 through 11 years have a reduced dosage of vaccine as compared with the 12+ population. As with the 12+ population, the vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years is provided in an initial and second dose separated by 21 days.

As of January 4, 2022, moderately or severely immunocompromised children 5-11 years of age are now recommended to receive an **additional** dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine 28 days after their second dose.

As a reminder, at this time, only the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is authorized for use in individuals younger than 18 years of age.

### **Q: Which youth are eligible for the COVID booster?**

As of January 4, 2022, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) amended the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, to expand authorization of a booster dose to individuals 12 through 17 years of age. Children and youth under the age of 12 years are currently not eligible for a booster dose.

Additionally, on January 4, 2022, the recommendation for a booster dose timing was changed to 5 months after completing the primary series with an mRNA vaccine (it was previously 6 months).

### **Q: I have a youth who received the first dose of the COVID vaccine and is scheduled to move to a new placement before the date of the second dose. Should we hold off on the move until they receive their second dose?**

A: A pending COVID vaccine (initial or second dose) should not be a consideration changing placements. Placement decisions are independent from vaccine decisions.

There is some flexibility for administration of the second dose with the Pfizer vaccine. Ideally the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is at 3 weeks (or 21 days) after the first shot. The second dose should be administered later if there is difficulty getting it within the recommended time, but not earlier than recommended.

A person is not required to get first and second dose in the same location as long as proper documentation can be found by the different provider.

### **Q: What do I do with (or where do I find) documentation of the vaccine when a youth has received the COVID vaccine?**

Updated 1-10-22

A: At the time of a COVID vaccine, a paper record (or “shot record”) is provided. This document is very important, as it must be brought to the appointment for the second dose.

Proof of vaccine administration should be documented in the child’s case file, by scanning the paper record and uploading it into IMPACT.

COVID vaccines are entered into the statewide ImmTrac system, which uploads into a youth’s Health Passport monthly. A caseworker will be able to find the COVID vaccine information in the Health Passport in the Patient History or Medication History tabs.

**Q: Where do I go to find a provider for the COVID vaccine?**

A: 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. Tools for locating vaccine providers are also available at [covidvaccine.texas.gov](https://covidvaccine.texas.gov) or [vacunacovid.texas.gov](https://vacunacovid.texas.gov). While distribution of the vaccine is controlled by the Department of State Health Services in all areas of the state, STAR Health may assist in finding a location. STAR Health Member Services can be reached at 1-866-912-6283.

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.

**Q: Is COVID vaccine required if a youth is eligible?**

A: No, the COVID vaccine is voluntary in Texas. The COVID vaccine is recommended for anyone who is eligible to receive it, including youth who qualify per DSHS guidelines. Unlike other routine vaccines, the COVID vaccine is currently authorized by the FDA for emergency use, which means getting it is voluntary and the youth should agree (if able) in addition to the medical consent. DFPS staff should support youth who expressly want the vaccine by providing consent by the medical consentor or a back-up medical consentor.

**As the primary medical consentor, the caseworker may provide consent for the COVID-19 vaccine for a youth in conservatorship.** For children in TMC or PMC with any parent(s) whose rights have NOT been terminated, the caseworker will notify all parents with rights of a plan to obtain an approved COVID vaccine for an eligible child. If any parent with parental rights objects, do not proceed with vaccination and note the objection to the COVID-19 vaccination on Form 2085-B (Designation of Medical Consentor). Parental notification should be thoroughly documented in IMPACT in a case narrative note, including the date, time, and content of the notification.

**Q: How should I notify parents (whose parental rights have NOT been terminated) about the COVID-19 vaccine?**

A: Verbal communication is adequate. Suggested language is, "DFPS would like to help protect your child's health when in our care by providing him/her with the COVID-19 vaccine, which is approved for his/her age. There is no cost to you." Document the parental notification as indicated above.

**Q: What if I can't reach the parents (rights not terminated)?**

A: You may also leave a voicemail of the above language and indicate that the parent can contact you with any questions or concerns. You may proceed with vaccination of the youth if you have not heard any objection from a parent within 72 hours of your voicemail message. The notification via voicemail should also be documented in IMPACT, indicating the date, time, and content of your voicemail notification.

**Q: What if I can't even leave a voicemail or their phone is disconnected?**

A: You should make 3 attempts for parental notification on 3 separate days, to all known parents whose rights are not terminated. Document your attempts including the date and time of each notification attempt. Caseworkers may proceed with a COVID-19 vaccine for the youth after three documented notification attempts.

**Q: Where can I get an "at-home" COVID test for a child?**

A: "At-home test kits", four tests per child per month covered by STAR Health (or other Texas Medicaid plans), are available at no cost from a Medicaid-enrolled retail pharmacy with or without a prescription. The list of covered tests for Medicaid and CHIP is below and available on the Vendor Drug Program [website](#). HHSC selected these products based on their status under the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. To obtain, consentor presents either a Medicaid ID or, for a child in conservatorship, the Medical Consent Form, Form 2085-B. Coverage of COVID at-home testing is limited to a maximum of two tests initially, with refills to total no more than the medical four at-home tests per calendar month. This may be achieved in any combination of single or multipack test kits for no more than four at-home COVID tests in a given calendar month.