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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***

## **SAN FRANCISCO READY TO ROLL OUT COVID-19 VACCINES FOR 5 TO 11 YEAR OLDS**

*Appointments for COVID-19 vaccines are opening up to accommodate 44,000 newly eligible San Francisco children at many health-system sites, but demand may exceed supply for the first few weeks*

**San Francisco, CA** —San Francisco children ages 5 to 11 years old are now eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, following a careful clinical study of its safety and efficacy and after receiving final approval and guidance from federal and state authorities.

The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), health system partners and pharmacies will begin administering the vaccines largely by appointment only starting today in select locations, with SFDPH-affiliated spots and four school sites initially reserved for children in highly-impacted neighborhoods where access is crucial.

Demand for doses is expected to be high as an estimated 44,000 San Francisco children ages 5 to 11 become newly eligible. After the first few weeks, vaccine supplies are expected to increase and more evenly match the demand. For this week, SFDPH has received a shipment of 12,300 doses of the orange-capped pediatric version of the vaccine, which is one-third the dose of people 12 and older, and is distributing supplies to community and school sites, as well as independent pediatric providers. The larger health care systems and pharmacies are directly receiving separate vaccine allocations. Pediatric vaccine supply is expected to increase on a weekly basis.

“With this major expansion of COVID-19 vaccines to 5 to 11-year-old children, we are getting much closer to San Francisco being fully vaccinated,” said Director of Health, Dr. Grant Colfax. “Our school-aged children will now have the best defense against the virus – and schools, after school, youth sports programs, and the community will be that much safer. We highly recommend that all eligible children get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible, but parents and caregivers may need to be patient the first week or two as our system accommodates the vaccine expansion. Please keep checking back for appointments.”

We anticipate every child to have access to a vaccination over the next several weeks as we enter the busy holiday season. Parents and caregivers can make appointments using their health system’s instructions, or pharmacy websites. Other sources for vaccine appointments include the state’s vaccine booking website, [myturn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov) and the City’s website, [sf.gov/getvaccinated](https://sf.gov/getvaccinated), which will be updated with local information about appointments as it becomes available across the network of sites in San Francisco.

Many of the larger health systems, such as UCSF and Kaiser, will begin to book appointments on Friday and into the weekend as well as next week.. Scaling up, a number of larger-volume sites across the City, including those at major health systems, have the capacity to administer 500 or more doses per day, while SFDPH's [four school-based sites](#) are expanding to accommodate 250 vaccines per day to support the school community as needed. To ensure easy access for working families and children in school, SFDPH and health system partners will hold evening and weekend vaccination sites, and pop-up events at select locations.

The shot itself is nearly painless, and most people who get vaccinated may only experience side effects such as a sore arm, fever, or fatigue. These are completely normal and are signs the body is building immunity to the virus.

Parents, guardians, or other person with legal authority must consent to the receipt of the vaccine, and those with questions or concerns about the vaccine should talk to their health care provider and weigh any risk from a vaccine against the dangers of acquiring an infectious disease like COVID-19.

It is now also influenza season, and many clinics and vaccination sites can provide both COVID and Flu vaccinations to children, and it is safe to receive both on the same day. COVID vaccinations are an opportunity to connect children with their health care providers, and also address other health care needs they may have, including check-ups and getting up to date on their other vaccinations.

**How to support children during their vaccine visit:**

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/before-during-after-shots.html>

- Bring quiet activities to entertain your child for the required 15 minute observation period after receiving the vaccine.
- Pack your child's favorite toy, book, or blanket to comfort him or her during vaccinations.
- Be honest with your child. Explain that shots can pinch or sting, but that it won't hurt for long.
- Engage other family members, especially older siblings, to support your child.
- Avoid telling scary stories or making threats about shots.
- Remind your child that vaccines can keep him or her healthy – they are a good thing!
- Distract and comfort your child by cuddling, singing, or talking softly.
- Smile and make eye contact with your child. Let your child know that everything is ok.
- [Hold your child](#) firmly on your lap, whenever possible while they receive the shot.

For more information about COVID-19 vaccines for children, go to the [CDC's resource page](#).

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