

Health & Welfare e-Newsletter

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1 IMPORTANT INFORMATION: COVID-19



The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective for children 5 to 11

Choosing to vaccinate your child is an important decision, and it's OK if you have questions. Here's fact-based information from our medical experts to help guide you. If you want more information, we encourage you to talk with your child's doctor.

Vaccine safety and effectiveness

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for children?

Yes. The vaccine's safety was studied in approximately 3,100 children 5 to 11, and no serious side effects have been detected. The children's immune responses to the vaccine were like those of individuals 16 to 25.

How effective is the vaccine in children?

Pfizer's data shows that the vaccine is 90.7% effective in preventing COVID-19 in children 5 to 11. Study data also shows that the vaccine reduces the risk of children developing symptoms if they do become infected.

Why vaccinate young children when the risk to them is low? Is the benefit worth the risk?

Providing safe and effective vaccinations to children, especially as they've returned to school, is an important step to help protect them from getting sick from COVID-19. We're learning more and more that children can and do spread COVID-19. Although the risks to any individual child of having severe illness or complications from COVID-19 are low, with COVID-19 circulating in our communities, we still see children hospitalized with infections

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Learn more at kp.org/covidvaccine

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or complications like multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C). Although rare, children can also die from COVID-19 at rates comparable to seasonal flu.

More than 5,500 children with COVID-19 have developed MIS-C.¹ MIS-C is a condition where different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. Most children with MIS-C have gotten better with medical care, but 48 have died.

How is the Pfizer vaccine for this age group different?

Children 5 to 11 will get a lower dose of 10 micrograms – one-third of what's used for people 12 and older – and with smaller needles. This lower dose was selected to prioritize safety, tolerability, and immune response in this age group. Like the Pfizer vaccine for adults and teens, the vaccine will be given in 2 doses, 3 weeks apart. The caps on the vials will be color-coded to help differentiate them (orange caps for kids, and purple caps for adults and teens).

Vaccine side effects

What are the potential side effects?

Commonly reported side effects in the clinical trial were the same as those in people of other ages, including injection site pain (sore arm), redness and swelling, fatigue, headache, muscle and/or joint pain, chills, fever, swollen lymph nodes, nausea, and decreased appetite.

More children reported side effects after the second dose. Side effects were generally mild to moderate and occurred within 2 days after vaccination, and most went away within 1 to 2 days.

There were no cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) in the clinical trial. The Food and Drug Administration determined that the risk of a child in this age group developing myocarditis is low, and that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the potential risks. Myocarditis is a rare condition that usually resolves with over-the-counter medication and rest. It's been detected in 877 U.S. residents between ages 12 and 29 who have gotten a COVID-19 vaccine. None of those cases have been fatal.²

Getting a vaccine

Is there a cost for the vaccine?

No. You shouldn't be charged anything for a COVID-19 vaccination no matter where you or your child get it.

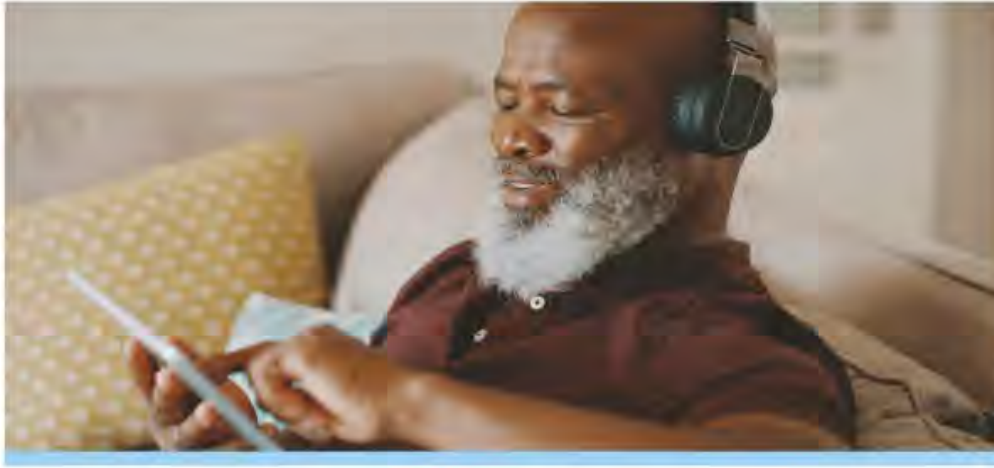
How should I prepare my child for their appointment?

Your child should wear comfortable clothing that makes it easy to expose their upper arm. Expect to have some waiting time, including an observation period of up to 30 minutes after the vaccination. Please don't arrive more than 5 minutes before your appointment. Masks are required in Kaiser Permanente buildings, but we'll give you or your child a mask if you don't have one.

1. "Health Department-Reported Cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) in the United States," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC.gov, accessed November 8, 2021. 2. "Myopericarditis Following COVID-19 Vaccination: Updates from the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, October 21, 2021.

Learn more at kp.org/covidvaccine





Simple ways to be kind to yourself

Practicing self-care is good for the mind, body, and spirit—especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's been a challenging year, but here are some simple things you can do to boost your mood, beat stress, and find more joy in your everyday life.

Take a break

Whether you're working from home or at your workplace, busy with kids or everyday housework, we can all use a break. Take a moment to stretch or focus on your breath. Even just 10 minutes of mindful movement can make a big difference.

Sleep well

Lack of sleep can affect the way you feel mentally and physically. If you're having trouble sleeping due to extra stress during the pandemic, try limiting your screen time before bed. Make changes that might help you let go of any extra stress from the day.

Stay connected

Staying connected with friends and family—either by phone, online, or in person—can do wonders for your physical and emotional wellness. Regular video chats are a great way to keep in touch. You can also plan visits with precautions to help protect one another from COVID-19.

Visit kp.org/mindbody.

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Health tip: Soothing Stress

Stress is defined as the body's response to the demands of everyday living and is the underlying cause of 60% of all human illness and disease.¹ While there is no magic pill to reduce or eliminate stress, there are several ways we can learn to manage the stress in our lives.

Stress may affect health in multiple negative ways

Stress can affect:

- The digestive system – stress may cause issues such as heart burn, acid reflux, nausea, diarrhea and constipation.
- Heart health – increased blood pressure may increase risk for stroke and heart attack.
- The Immune System – stress may weaken the immune system which increases susceptibility to viral illness and infection.
- Weight Gain – the stress hormone cortisol may increase the craving fats and carbohydrates, which may cause weight gain, particularly in the abdominal area. This raises the risk for heart disease and diabetes.
- Mental Health – chronic stress is a factor in behaviors such as overeating or not eating enough, alcohol or drug abuse, and social withdrawal.²

The 3 stages of stress

Dr. Hans Selye broke the stress response into three stages, which he called the General Adaptation Syndrome:³

- 1 **Alarm Stage** – also known as “fight or flight”, this stage occurs when you are frightened or under threat. Your heart rate speeds up and the body releases stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. If prolonged it can take a toll on your body.
- 2 **Resistance Stage** – occurs after the initial extreme reaction. Your body tries to adapt to the continued stress. If the stress passes, you can start to rebuild your defenses. If it becomes long-term, you move to the third stage.
- 3 **Exhaustion Stage** – is the “burnout” or overload phase. Continued pounding by stress depletes your body's reserves, which puts you at risk for disease. Facing multiple long-term stressors piles extra strain on your system and may quickly lead to exhaustion.

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The power of positive thinking

Whether we see the glass as half empty or half full is an indication of how we perceive things in life. Research suggests negative thinking not only affects health, but also our stress level. Individuals with an optimistic attitude:⁴

- May be better able to cope with stress
- Have a better immune system
- Are less likely to get depressed
- Catch few infectious diseases
- Have better health habits
- Often live a longer, healthier life⁵



What is resilience?

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity. It means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences.⁵

Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that may be learned and developed in anyone.

A few characteristics of people who manage stress well include:

- Being committed toward a greater or long-term objectives or goal
- Believing they are in control of their environment
- Welcoming new challenges and seeing them as positive opportunities
- Manage their time:
 - Make a list of everything to do during the day
 - Prioritize responsibilities. List the most important things at the top of the list and work down
 - Use down time effectively
 - Take care of routine tasks first
 - Delegate work – don't be afraid to ask for help
- Practice breathing techniques – just five minutes of deep breathing may be enough to ease stress
- Practice yoga
- Get a massage
- Seek support from a friend or a professional if they have trouble managing stress on their own

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⁵ American Institute of Stress, www.stress.org, accessed June 2020

² Healthline, <http://healthline.com/health/stress/#on-body>, accessed June 2020

³ Selye, Hans, The Stress of Life, 1978.

⁴ <https://proliferatepsychologyprogram.com/learned-optimism/>, accessed June 2020

⁵ <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>, accessed June 2020

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A Season of Smiles

Avoid dental dangers during the holidays



From holiday shopping to wintertime weather, the end of the year can be intense. Make sure the festivities don't harm your teeth — know what oral health risks to look out for this time of year and what you can do to stay smiling.

Dry Mouth

The danger: As temperatures drop, relative humidity levels indoors and outdoors can fall, leaving your skin, hair and mouth dry. To top it off, some holiday favorites high in salt or caffeine can make dehydration even worse. Not only does this problem cause bad breath, it also boosts your chance of cavities.

The solution: Drink plenty of water throughout the day, especially after coffee or alcohol. If you need to crank up the heat to get through winter, consider using a humidifier to keep a healthy level of moisture in the air.

Jaw Pain

The danger: End-of-year stress can take a toll on your oral health. Clenching your teeth, a common effect of stress, can lead to jaw problems.

The solution: Cut down factors causing you stress. Practice physical exercises to relax your head and shoulders, and consider squeezing a stress ball when the pressure piles on.



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deltadentalins.com/enrollees



Tooth Sensitivity

The danger: Chilly temperatures can get your teeth chattering. Sensitive teeth can get a shock when hit by a blast of cold air, and the cold can make your teeth contract.

The solution: Bundle up before braving the elements. Keep your mouth closed, and wrap a scarf around your mouth if necessary.



Falling Behind on Brushing

The danger: It's easy to let your oral health habits fall by the wayside during the holidays. But slacking on brushing and flossing lets plaque build up, potentially leading to painful cavities and inflamed gums.

The solution: Keep a toothbrush, toothpaste and floss in your bag so you can brush and floss wherever you are. To maintain regular habits, set up a holiday brushing schedule. For emergencies, keep some xylitol gum or mints handy. A sugar substitute, xylitol contains cavity-fighting properties to protect your teeth.



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EP57 #99529 (rev. 11/16)



Adult Care

LIBERTY cares about more than just teeth!

help tip: The Dental Home

Having a "Dental Home" helps produce and maintain a healthy smile

Families are encouraged to build a relationship with their dental office so they have a great a "Dental Home" – an environment that encourages members of the family to have regular dental checkups.

Benefits of establishing a Dental Home:

- Patients become familiar with the dentist, their staff and the office
- Promotes early and regular access to preventive and routine dental services
- Increases continuity of care, prevention, dental and overall health
- Decreases duplication of dental services caused by seeking dental care from multiple dental offices

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Dental Association (ADA), and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) all recommend establishing a "Dental Home" for your child by one year of age. Children who have a dental home are more likely to receive appropriate preventive and routine care. A well-established Dental Home also includes appropriate referrals to dental specialists.

With the rising incidence of tooth decay among young children, having a Dental Home can be essential in promoting preventive care. In addition to implementing lifelong oral health at home, establishing and maintaining an ongoing relationship between the dentist and the patient is imperative. The Dental Home is an open door to all aspects of oral health care delivered in a comprehensive, continuously accessible, coordinated, and family-centered way.



fact:
Children learn Oral Health from their parents

Making members shine, one smile at a time™ www.libertydentalplan.com

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Health Tip

Healthy Dental Habits

Due to water fluoridation and fluoride toothpaste, the baby boomer generation is the first to keep their natural teeth over their entire lifetime. However, **poor oral hygiene** poses a risk of dental complications to all generations. Poor oral hygiene is correlated with other diseases including heart disease, diabetes, pneumonia and rheumatoid arthritis.¹

Risk factors for **oral cancer** are tobacco use, alcohol use, poor oral hygiene and human papilloma virus (HPV).

Gum disease develops when plaque is allowed to build up along and under the gum line. Warning signs include bad breath, tender, bleeding gums, loose teeth, receding gums and pain.



A healthy mouth for a lifetime includes:¹

- Regular dental visits
- Brush twice a day for at least 2 minutes and floss once a day
- DO NOT use tobacco products
- Limit sugary and alcoholic beverages

Brushing is probably the most obvious mouth hygiene component. It's recommended that you brush your teeth twice a day for at least 2 minutes. Gently brush back and forth in short strokes. Be sure to brush outer, inner and chewing surfaces of the teeth and the tongue. It is a good idea to replace your toothbrush every 3-4 months.



Other ways to maintain good oral hygiene:

- Proper nutrition
- Drink plenty of water
- Limit the number of snacks you eat
- Eat a variety of foods from each of the five major food groups, including:
 - whole grains
 - lean sources of protein
 - fruits
 - low-fat/fat-free dairy foods
 - vegetables

Did you know?*

27%

of adults in the U.S. have **tooth decay**.

46%

of adults 30 and older have signs of **gum disease**.

70%

of adults 65 and older have **periodontal disease**.

Oral cancer affects

51,500

people in the U.S. each year.

¹ American Dental Association. <http://www.aad.org/healthy-mouth/brushing-your-teeth>, accessed August 29, 2016.

² Centers for Disease Control. <http://www.cdc.gov/oral-healthy-mouth/patient-healthy-mouth.html>, accessed August 29, 2016.

The information provided in this tip is for general informational purposes only and is not a medical or health care recommendation. It is not intended to be used as a substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult your healthcare provider for more information.

KEEP YOUR EYES HEALTHY FOR LIFE.

A WellVision Exam[®] from a VSP[®] network doctor helps detect the signs of health conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol—along with other eye and health issues.



YEARLY EYE EXAMS ARE IMPORTANT.



BABIES & TODDLERS

Approximately 80% of what children learn is through their eyes.¹ Impaired vision can affect a child's cognitive, emotional, and physical development by potentially limiting their exposure to a range of experiences and information. Be sure to schedule their first eye exam at six months old and then every year.



CHILDREN

More than one in four school-age children have some form of a vision problem. Studies show that 60% of students identified as problem learners have undetected vision troubles.² Schedule your child's yearly eye exam at the beginning of each school year.



ADULTS

More than four million Americans over the age of 40 have some form of vision impairment.³ Vision changes are normal with age. Even if you have 20/20 vision, annual eye exams are important because eye doctors can spot signs of chronic conditions before symptoms appear.



SENIORS

As we get older, we're more susceptible to cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss and blindness among Americans age 65 and older.⁴ Many eye diseases start with subtle symptoms and yearly eye exams can help prevent vision loss.



DON'T WAIT

until there's a vision issue to schedule an eye exam!

Yearly eye exams are preventive care that can help you stay healthy at any age.

Schedule an appointment with your VSP network doctor today!

Visit vsp.com/eye-doctor to find the doctor who's right for you.
Need help? Call us at 800.877.7195.

1. University of California, Los Angeles academic study, 2012 2. American Optometric Association, 2021 3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 2020 4. National Eye Institute, 2018

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