Five Reasons To Vaccinate

COVID-19 vaccines are available for everyone ages 6 months and older

Vaccination is one of the best tools we have to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and to make sure children can keep being part of in-person activities that are important for their physical and mental health.

Vaccination is safe and effective.
Millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccine have already safely been administered in the United States. The pediatric formulation is a smaller dose for children.

Immunization can make a difference in your child's life.
Children can become seriously ill from COVID-19. Vaccination reduces their risk of getting severely sick or hospitalized, or of suffering long COVID or multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children.

Immunization protects others you care about.
Children who are infected with COVID-19 can spread the virus to others, even if they have a mild case or don't experience any symptoms. Vaccinating everyone in your household who is eligible helps protect your whole family, including those who may have compromised immunity or those too young to be vaccinated.

Vaccination can save your family time and money.
COVID-19 vaccines are free for everyone. But getting sick with COVID-19 can be costly. Missing daycare or school because you are sick, having long-term health problems, or needing to quarantine can mean lost time at work or medical bills.

Vaccination is our best defense.
Just like with other diseases, vaccination is a safer way to build immunity than by getting sick. We have vaccines to thank for preventing over 400 million illnesses and avoiding almost one million deaths for children born between 1994 and 2018.

STATE of ALASKA
Department of Health and Social Services

What to Expect Before, During, and After Vaccination.

Prepare for your child's COVID-19 vaccine appointment and know what to do to support your child.

For more information and to find a vaccine provider, visit *covidvax. alaska.gov.*

Before the visit

- Schedule your child's COVID-19 vaccination at your pediatrician's office, a local vaccination clinic or at your local pharmacy. Some sites require appointments while others have walk-in hours. Search for pediatric COVID-19 vaccine providers near you at *vaccines.gov*.
- Call your child's pediatrician or primary care doctor and tell them you're planning to have your child vaccinated. Ask them questions and share any concerns you may have.
- Your child can also receive routine shots at the same appointment for the COVID-19 shot. This includes getting an annual influenza shot. Ask your health care provider if your child is caught up on all routine immunizations.
- Talk with your child before the appointment. Tell your child what to expect and remind them that vaccines will help keep them healthy.
- Depending on your child, consider bringing their favorite toy to engage and comfort them.

At the clinic

- Ask any additional questions you may have.
- At the time of the vaccination, you can distract and comfort your child with a song, toy, or special blanket.
- Cuddles and praise will reassure your child that this is okay.
- If your child is younger, holding them on your lap during the immunization may help.
- After your child receives their first vaccine, schedule their second dose. Make sure that your pediatrician's office has a copy of the card in your child's medical record.
- Keep the paper vaccination card you receive. Don't laminate the card in case more information needs to be added. Take a photo of it or copy it and keep everything in a safe place. For privacy reasons, don't share a photo of the card on social media.

After the visit

- Common side effects include redness or soreness at the injection site or fever, chills, tiredness, or headache. These typically go away in a day or two.
- Ask your child's doctor if you can give your child a pain reliever if they are experiencing common side effects.
- If you see something that concerns you call your child's health care provider.
- Remember that your child is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose. Encourage your child to keep doing their part to protect themselves and others by wearing a mask and following other COVID precautions.
- When your child is fully vaccinated, layering protection may still be important depending on COVID-19 case rates in your community, but you will have added confidence that your child is protected!