

Illinois Department Of Public Health Adopts CDC Recommendations For Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine For Children Ages 5 Through 11

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is adopting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) recommendation for children ages 5 through 11 years to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. The

announcement comes following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) expansion of the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children on October 29, 2021.

Previously, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was authorized for use in individuals ages 12 years and older. The vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years is a smaller dose (10 µg), a third of the dose for individuals 12 years and older (30 µg). The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is administered as a series of two doses, 3 weeks apart, for all eligible individuals.

“I encourage parents who may have questions about COVID-19 vaccines for their children to talk with a pediatrician or family doctor,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “Medical experts and scientists have reviewed the data, which included clinical trials with more than 3,000 children receiving the vaccine, and have recommended the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children. While most children do not suffer severe COVID-19 illness, some do. We also know children are great transmitters and can unknowingly infect people who could suffer severe illness. We need as many people as possible, including children, to be vaccinated to stop the spread of the virus and end this pandemic.”

COVID-19 vaccinations for those 5 years and older will be available at local health departments, many pharmacies, pediatrician offices, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and from other providers who offer the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. IDPH has requested all COVID-19 vaccine providers watch the Pfizer-BioNTech training video for administering the pediatric doses of vaccine. Approximately 2,200 pediatric providers in Illinois have enrolled in the State immunization registry and can administer COVID-19 vaccine to their patients. Additionally, IDPH continues to work with schools to set up vaccination clinics and more than 1,200 youth vaccination events have been held or are scheduled.

In clinical trials, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was found to be more than 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 in children ages 5 through 11 years. Side effects commonly reported in children, although less frequent compared to adolescents and adults, were generally mild to moderate and included injection site pain (sore arm), redness and swelling, fatigue, headache, muscle and/or joint pain, chills, and fever. Side effects occurred within two days after vaccination and went away within a day or two.

Pfizer Inc. will continue to monitor the safety of the vaccine and will be required to report to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, along with providers, all serious adverse events, cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome, cases that result in hospitalization or death, and vaccine administration errors.

Both the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccines are authorized for use in individuals 18 years and older and will continue to be available to adults.