

Contra Costa County Ready to Vaccinate Children Ages 5-11 Once They're Eligible

Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) has pre-ordered thousands of pediatric doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine as the county prepares for federal and state health officials to expand eligibility to kids ages 5-11.

CCHS expects to receive about 20,000 doses of the pediatric version of the Pfizer vaccine for county and partner clinics early this week. Other healthcare providers and pharmacies are also stocking up and getting ready.

CCHS is also working with education and healthcare partners in the region – including John Muir Health, Kaiser, La Clinica and Lifelong Medical – to host vaccine clinics at school sites once eligibility expands to younger kids. We will be announcing more details about school-based vaccine clinics soon.

"I know a lot of parents have been waiting a long time to be able to get their younger kids vaccinated," said Diane Burgis, chair of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. "We're almost there. If everything goes right, parents will be able to get their children fully vaccinated before the winter holidays."

The timing of when the vaccine becomes available to younger children depends on when federal and state officials complete their review process. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) on Friday approved the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in children ages 5-11.

This week, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) will be deciding whether to recommend Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine next week for children ages 5-11. The CDC's recommendation is required before vaccines can be given to this age group.

If the CDC recommends the vaccine for the younger age group, it may take a couple of days until immunization clinics actually begin administering the pediatric vaccines. The Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup, a regional collaborative of scientists from several states including California with expertise in immunization and public health, must also weigh in after the CDC makes its decision.

Parents should check with their child's regular healthcare provider or local pharmacies about availability. CCHS expects to begin offering the pediatric vaccine by Nov. 6 at county-run vaccination clinics.

The pediatric COVID-19 vaccine, which is one-third the dosage given to teens and adults, will come in different vials and packaging than the adult version. Like with adults, children ages 5-11 still must get two shots at least three weeks apart to get the maximum protection of the vaccine, which was shown to have a 90.7% efficacy rate in clinical trials among this age group.

Initial demand for the pediatric vaccine is expected to be high as eager parents seek protection for their children. There are an estimated 92,000 county residents between the ages of 5 and 11.

Contra Costa County has a [high vaccination rate among its eligible residents](#), including among those ages 12-15, which is currently the youngest age group eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. About 87% of residents ages 12-15 have received at least one dose of vaccine.