



ISLAND COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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PFIZER Press Release

Washington State Department of Health

For immediate release

Press Release from May 13th, 2021

Everyone 12 and older now eligible for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has expanded COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to everyone 12 and older following recommendations that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is safe and extremely effective for 12 to 15-year-olds.

Monday, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted an emergency use authorization (EUA) amendment to expand the Pfizer vaccine to people 12 years and older. Tonight, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup voted to recommend the vaccine for immediate use.

“Expanding eligibility to this younger age group protects our children and gives families peace of mind. It is the best step we can take as parents to ensure our kids remain in the classroom, can safely spend time with friends, and take part in sports and extracurricular activities,” said Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH. “Research continues to show this vaccine is safe and I am thrilled it is now an option for parents and their young teens.”

The two-dose vaccine has been authorized for people 16 and older since December. In March, Pfizer announced findings from its vaccine trial which found the vaccine to be safe and 100% effective for kids as young as 12. The company reported the vaccine produced an antibody response in children that exceeded those in earlier trials of older teens and young adults.

Although fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus, get sick, and spread the virus to others. Most children with COVID-19 have mild symptoms or have no symptoms at all. However, some children can get severely ill and may require hospitalization, intensive care, or a ventilator to help them breathe. In rare cases, children can die.

COVID-19 vaccine side effects generally mirror those experienced by adults, which may include sore arm, fatigue, or headache. Families that have questions about the vaccine are encouraged to reach out to their child’s health care provider to determine the best option for them. [Those under age 18](#) may need [consent from a parent or guardian](#) to get the vaccine, unless they are legally emancipated.

To schedule an appointment, visit [Vaccine Locator](#), which shows nearby providers and lists vaccine type. **When scheduling an appointment for someone 12 to 17, make sure the location you choose administers the Pfizer vaccine, which is the only vaccine currently authorized for people that age.** If you have questions or need help scheduling an appointment, call the state’s new COVID-19 vaccination number 833-VAX-HELP. Language assistance is available.



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In addition to this expansion, Pfizer recently announced it plans to seek authorization for its vaccine for 2 to 11-year-olds this fall, and for children 6 months to 2 years old at the end of 2021. Earlier this month the company applied for full FDA approval of its COVID-19 vaccine, which would make Pfizer the first COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S. with this distinction. The FDA is expected to take several weeks to review the application.

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