

Maura J. Rossman, M.D., Health Officer

December 7, 2021

Dear Parents,

It has been almost a year since the Howard County Health Department (HCHD) started administering COVID-19 vaccine. Since that time, more than 77% of all Howard County residents have been fully vaccinated, including 85% of children ages 12-17. Vaccination remains the most effective strategy to save lives and end this pandemic.

We have now entered another phase of the pandemic - vaccination of younger children. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was authorized for children ages 5-11 on October 29. This means FDA scientists and doctors deemed the vaccine safe and effective after careful analysis of the data from clinical trials for this age group. COVID-19 vaccines have undergone – and will continue to undergo – the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history

Clinical trials in children ages 5-11 years found the vaccine to be 90.7% effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19. Safety data from the trials found the most common reactions were pain at the injection site, fatigue and headache. Reactions were mostly mild or moderate. Most side effects went away within one to two days. In the past month, more than 4 million children have been safely vaccinated in the United States.

Like the vaccine given to adults, the vaccine for children is given in two doses, three weeks apart. While the vaccine is the same, the amount given to children is one-third the dose used for children ages 12 and older and adults. Both the pediatric and adult versions of the vaccine have been found to be equally safe and effective in preventing serious illness from COVID-19. If you have questions about the safety or efficacy of vaccinating your child, we encourage you to get answers to these questions from a reliable source - talk to your child's doctor or your trusted medical professional to make the best choice based on your specific circumstances.

As of December 7, 2021, 11,636 Howard County children age 5 -11 have been vaccinated. Many local pediatricians, healthcare providers, pharmacies and other retailers have vaccine for children. The Health Department is also running a special clinic at Howard Community College for this age group. These HCHD clinics include quiet rooms and other specialized methods to make this experience a successful one for young children, including those with special needs.

If you have not done so already, now is the time to plan to get your children vaccinated to protect them from COVID-19. The first thing any parent should do when ready to make a vaccine appointment for their child is contact their child's medical provider and see if they have vaccine. To locate other clinic locations through the Health Department and our partners, parents can visit [vaccine.howardcountymd.gov](https://www.vaccine.howardcountymd.gov).

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Maura J. Rossman, MD
Howard County Health Officer



Dr. Michael Martirano
HCPSS Superintendent



Dr. Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive