



**MEDIA CONTACT:**  
Laurel Johnson, PIO  
O: 231-347-5628  
[l.johnson@nwhealth.org](mailto:l.johnson@nwhealth.org)  
[www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org)

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## **Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update**

**NOTE: COVID-19 case counts for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction are included in a separate document that accompanies today's Update.**

### **Q&A about COVID-19 vaccine for adolescents**

Adolescents and their parents who may have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine or have any barriers to attending a clinic are welcome to reach out to the Health Department of Northwest Michigan.

"We welcome questions about how the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine may affect their child. Feel free to ask questions because an informed client is more relaxed and open to receiving the shot," said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer.

Peacock also shared that parents can call the health department at 800.386.5959 or email [publichealthinfoline@nwhealth.org](mailto:publichealthinfoline@nwhealth.org) to get in touch with a qualified public health professional about questions regarding the Pfizer vaccine and also to find out about vaccination clinics near them that are convenient with their child's schedule, including after-school hours. These qualified staff are ready to answer questions about any of the three safe and effective vaccines and help residents find a nearby clinic.

"We are also happy to hear about any challenges parents have had in getting their child vaccinated, such as appointment times or locations, so that we can develop plans to meet their needs! We want to remove any barriers anyone may have – especially those 12 to 18," Peacock said, "We are a willing partner to meet you when and where we are needed."

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia recently put together a "[Questions and Answers About COVID-19](#)" resource geared toward adolescents. A few of the Q&As appear below.

#### **Is it safe for my adolescent or teen to get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The Pfizer COVID-19 mRNA vaccine is approved for those 12 years of age and older. A parent/guardian must accompany anyone under 18 years of age to a clinic. Other COVID-19 vaccines are still being tested in those younger than 18 years of age. When the Pfizer vaccine was tested in 12- to 18-year-olds, it was found to be safe:

- Those 16- to 18-years old were included in the trials presented to the FDA in December 2020. Since then, more than 2 million teens had received one dose of the vaccine, and more than 1 million had received both doses by May 12, 2021 – the date that the vaccine was approved for 12- to 15-year-olds. No vaccine safety concerns have been identified.
- The clinical trial in 12- to 15-year-olds evaluated about 1,100 children who received the vaccine and compared them with about the same number who got placebo (a salt solution) as well as almost 2,000 16- to 25-year-olds who were vaccinated and about the same number in an age-

*The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit [nwhealth.org](http://nwhealth.org).*

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matched placebo group. No vaccinated individuals got infected with COVID-19 or experienced severe side effects, like anaphylactic allergic reaction. A small number experienced swelling under the arm on the side in which the vaccine was administered. Called lymphadenopathy, this can also occur in adults who get the mRNA vaccines. This side effect occurred 2-10 days after vaccination and typically lasted up to 10 days. Trial participants will continue to be followed for up to two years.

An article to prepare teens for what to expect during their vaccine visit can be [viewed here](#).

### **What side effects will my child experience from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Side effects in children 12 to 15 years of age were similar to what has been found in other age groups, including pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, fever, chills, muscle pain, or joint pain. Likewise, other than injection site pain, side effects were more common after the second dose compared with the first dose. Most side effects were mild or moderate. No one in the study experienced an allergic reaction following vaccination, but this age group is not less likely to experience such a reaction; therefore, teenagers should remain at the site where the vaccine was given for 15 or 30 minutes based on their risk and history with severe allergic reactions using the same guidance offered for adults.

### **Why do kids need the COVID-19 vaccine since they don't get that sick if they are infected?**

While children and teens may not be as likely to get severely ill from COVID-19, it can still happen and, in fact, the average age of hospitalizations has been decreasing, particularly since the oldest members of our communities have been vaccinated. With this in mind, parents and teens should consider the following:

- In the first 13 months of the pandemic, more than 1.5 million 12- to 17-year-olds have been knowingly infected. This number is likely to be an under-representation given that many people may not have symptoms or be sick enough to get tested or seek medical care.
- In April 2021, about 9% of those diagnosed with COVID-19 were 12 to 17 years old.
- Hospitalization rates among this age group have also been increasing. More than 13,000 12- to 17-year-olds were hospitalized with COVID-19 by early May 2021, and, in fact, more teens have been hospitalized with COVID-19 than were hospitalized with H1N1 during the 2009-2010 influenza pandemic.
- Conditions such as obesity, asthma, and developmental delay, as well as other pre-existing conditions, increase the chance for hospitalization.
- More than 125 adolescents and teens between 12 and 17 years of age have died from COVID-19, putting COVID-19 as one of the top 10 causes of death in this age group.
- As of the beginning of May 2021, more than 3,700 cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) have been diagnosed. About 1 in 5 of these occurred in 12- to 17-year-olds. MIS-C typically occurs 2 to 6 weeks after having COVID-19, can occur following a mild infection, tends to be more severe in adolescents and teens, and causes about 6 or 7 of every 10 individuals to be placed in intensive care. MIS-C can affect heart function, and about 1 or 2 of 100 children with this condition have died.
- Finally, this age group can also transmit the infection to more vulnerable family and community members, such as those who are unable to get the vaccine.

### **Can the COVID-19 vaccine affect puberty or fertility in my child?**

No, the rumors related to COVID-19 vaccines affecting puberty or fertility are unfounded. The mRNA vaccines are processed near the injection site and activated immune system cells travel through the lymph system to nearby lymph nodes. In this manner, they are not affecting hormone levels, nor are they traveling throughout the body to other parts of the body. As such, there would not be a biological reason to expect that maturation or reproductive functionality of either males or females would be negatively affected by COVID-19 vaccination now or in years to follow.

Still need to get vaccinated? The health department continues to offer vaccination clinics throughout the four-county jurisdiction, in addition to working with local businesses to offer pop-up vaccination clinics. Public health nurses are on site at these events and able to answer any questions that residents may have regarding the vaccines. All clinics are open to walk-ins or people can register by clicking on the clinic link below.

#### **Thursday, June 3**

- Charlevoix Co. Shirley Roloff Northside Center, 13513 Division St., Charlevoix, 1-4 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
- Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 3434 M-119, Harbor Springs, 1-4:20 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). Walk-ins welcome or to schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

#### **Friday, June 4**

- Odawa Casino, 1760 Lears Rd., Petoskey, 12-4 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 or older). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
- Corwith Township Hall, 8170 Mill St. (Old 27), Vanderbilt, 2-4 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 or older). Walk-ins welcome or to schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
- Snowbelt Brewery, 132 W. Main St., Gaylord, 5-6 p.m., **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 or older). Walk-ins welcome.

#### **Saturday, June 5**

- Odawa Casino, 1760 Lears Rd., Petoskey, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 or older). Walk-ins welcome or to schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

The calendar on the website [www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org) lists clinics currently scheduled through June 25.

Stay up to date on the latest information in the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction by [liking and following our Facebook page](#) and visiting our [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). To locate a testing facility, visit the [Michigan COVID-19 Test Finder website](#). To track the risk levels of COVID-19 pandemic indicators, visit the [MI Safe Start Map website](#). For more information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, visit the MDHHS [vaccine website](#) or the [CDC vaccine website](#).