

Here are some frequently answered questions for parents, from Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at the UK Health Security Agency

Why do young people aged 12 to 15 years need to get the vaccine?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection is typically mild in most young people, but it can be very unpleasant for some and one dose of the vaccine will provide good protection against severe illness and hospitalisation.

Vaccinating 12 to 15 year olds also helps reduce the need for young people to have time off school and reduces the risk of spread of COVID-19 within schools. The vaccine will protect young people from COVID-19 and reduce disruption to education, which is good for their welfare and mental health.

Why did the JCVI say young people didn't need the vaccine?

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) looked at the direct health benefits of vaccines, and in the case of 12 to 15 year olds, they said that there was only a small advantage for young people in getting a dose of the vaccine.

The Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) took into account the extra health benefits from avoiding children missing education and concluded that there were public health grounds to recommend vaccinating 12 to 15 year olds. The UK CMOs' advice sets out their reasoning here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-15-years-against-covid-19>

My child has already had COVID-19 - should they still get the vaccine?

Yes, they should be vaccinated regardless of whether they have already had a COVID-19 infection because:

- research has not yet shown how long people who have had COVID-19 are protected from getting it again after they recover
- vaccination helps to boost your protection, even if you've already had COVID-19

Has the vaccine been given to 12 to 15 year olds in other countries?

Trials in thousands of children have shown that the vaccine works very well in this age group. The vaccine has since been given to millions of 12 to 15 year olds in a number of countries,

including 8 million in the United States. Data from these countries show that the vaccine has a good safety record.

Key questions on the children and young people's COVID-19 vaccination programme (continued)

Does the COVID-19 vaccine cause heart problems in young people?

Worldwide, there have been very rare cases of inflammation of the heart called myocarditis or pericarditis reported after COVID-19 vaccines. Most of these young people felt better following rest and simple treatments. These cases have been seen mostly in younger males and mainly occurred within a few days of the second dose; it is extremely rare after the first dose of the vaccine.

Is the vaccine safe for children with allergies or other medical conditions?

There are very few children or young people who cannot receive the vaccine. If in doubt, young people and their parents or carers should check with the school immunisation team or consult their GP or specialist clinician.

I have seen fake stories on social media about the vaccine

You may have come across false or misleading information about the virus or the vaccine. It is important that you get your information from trusted sources such as:

The children's programme information

The parents' guide is on the link below with the guidance for schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-resources-for-schools>

Here is the leaflet for the children and parents:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-resources-for-children-and-young-people>

Further information can be found here: www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccine-children.