

# COVID-19 News for Schools

WEEK OF MAY 24

Throughout May, Vaccinate West Michigan will bring you the latest in COVID-19 vaccine information, as well as stories, events and resources, all with the goal of providing you with timely, relevant information for your school districts, parents and students.



## Tips to Prepare for Your Child's COVID-19 Vaccine

Vaccinating kids and teens ages 12 and up gets them one step closer to enjoying all of the things they love to do. As the CDC recently mentioned, those who are fully vaccinated can [resume normal activities](#).

- Talk to your child before their appointment about [what to expect](#).
- At the appointment, tell the provider about any allergies your child may have.
- Plan to stay for 15–30 minutes so your child can be observed in case of a severe allergic reaction (rare).
- Expect some [side effects](#), like pain at the injection site, headache or fever, which are normal, and signal that their body is building protection.
- Remember Pfizer is the only vaccine available and approved for 12–17 year olds and requires two shots.

COVID-19 vaccines for those 12+ are widely available. Check with your pediatrician, your local pharmacy or visit the [Vaccinate West Michigan website for a clinic near you](#).

## COVID-19 Vaccines Are Safe

COVID-19 vaccines have had the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history, which includes studies in adolescents. The vaccine is a [safe and effective](#) way to build immunity. Even those who are healthy or have already had COVID-19 should get vaccinated.

**Vaccinate West Michigan** is a collaborative of local health departments, health systems, pharmacies, colleges and universities, and more – who have partnered together with the common goal to meet the diverse needs of our communities and share COVID-19 vaccine facts, data and clinics. [Learn more](#).

## Facts

- You cannot get COVID-19 from any COVID-19 vaccine.
- mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna vaccines) cannot change your DNA.
- COVID-19 vaccines do not cause infertility and are safe during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.
- mRNA vaccines reduce the risk of COVID-19, including severe illness, among people who are fully vaccinated [by 90 percent or more](#).
- The short-term side effects of a COVID-19 vaccine (pain at injection site, headache, fever, nausea) outweigh COVID-19 risks like death, severe infection and long-term health problems in the lungs, heart and brain.

## Q&A:

### Informative Reads

The new information on when to wear masks can be confusing. Dr. Rosemary Olivero, a pediatric infectious disease specialist with Spectrum Health Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, offers tips and best practices, especially for young children. [Read more.](#)



### #VaccinateGR

[Principal Kenyatta Hill](#) from Grand Rapids University Prep Academy, and GRAAHI Advisory Council Member, wants to tell you why she got vaccinated.

**Q:** What does “fully vaccinated” mean?

**A:** You're fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after your second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine

If you don't meet these requirements, you are NOT considered fully vaccinated and should not resume normal activities. Keep taking all [precautions](#) until you are fully vaccinated.

**Q:** What is Community Immunity?

**A:** Community immunity, often referred to as “herd” immunity, happens when a large part of the population is immune to a virus, typically through vaccination which creates antibodies in an individual. The more people with virus antibodies, the harder it is for a virus to spread within a community. Herd immunity also helps protect those who can't be vaccinated. With the case of COVID-19, that currently includes kids under the age of 12. Help keep kids and others safe by getting vaccinated and contributing to herd immunity.

*“The public health is very dependent on the personal decisions that each of us make,”* said Dr. Matthew Biersack, chief medical officer at Mercy Health. [Watch the full clip on why vaccines are so important for everyone.](#)

## Conversations and Events

Join [Vaccinate West Michigan](#) for the Keeping Our Kids Safe series on Facebook—community conversations talking about what's new with COVID-19 and vaccines.

Missed the conversation on May 21 with students and clinical experts? [Watch it now.](#)



[May 28, 9 a.m.](#)

A Conversation with Parents and Clinical Experts

[June 4, 9 a.m.](#)

A Conversation with School District Leaders and Clinical Experts

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