

Transcript: COVID-19 Vaccines in Young Children Training

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Welcome to the MDH COVID-19 Vaccines in Young Children Training. The training will proceed automatically, but you can pause or go back if needed. Please note that all resources and links in this presentation are included on the page below this training.

This training is intended to provide information and resources for any COVID-19 vaccination site that does not routinely provide vaccination services for children. But this information cannot substitute for in-person, hands-on training from staff with experience vaccinating young children. Each site is responsible to ensure proper training and competency of their staff if they choose to provide vaccination services to children under 12 years old.

The information and resources provided in this training will not cover the basics of immunization or specific information about COVID-19 vaccine. Trainings on these topics are available on the Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 webpage ([COVID-19 Vaccine Trainings for Health Professionals \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/training.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/training.html)). It is imperative that all sites vaccinating children with COVID-19 vaccine complete the required COVID-19 trainings. Anyone vaccinating children should also be familiar with the Interim COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Guide. If administering, storing, or handling COVID-19 vaccine you should be receiving our weekly updates. This is where we communicate all changes about COVID-19 vaccine. Register to receive these weekly updates to stay informed ([COVID-19 Vaccine Providers \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/provider.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/provider.html)).

By the end of this training, you will be better able to describe how to approach children and families, describe environmental considerations in vaccinating for children, determine the correct anatomical site for vaccine administration in children, and be able to identify and respond to adverse events in children.

It is good to remember that the approach you use to vaccinate children is not going to be the same as adults. The developmental stage of a child will determine the social, psychological, and physiological approaches a vaccinator must use to safely vaccinate. Because vaccinating small children is very different than vaccinating adults, some staff may not be comfortable or willing to vaccinate younger children. Please respect and consider that when determining if your vaccination site can provide services to younger children and making subsequent staff assignments.

When vaccinating children, it's best to use a family-centered approach. Have the parent accompany the child during the vaccination. Occasionally a parent will not want to be present, so you may need to request someone to help as needed. Parents know their child best, so take time to listen to them. Discuss with the parent what works best for their child when they initially come for their appointment. Parents get anxious too, so decreasing their

anxiety will help to decrease their child's anxiety. Provide parents with all the same patient education including the emergency use authorization or EUA fact sheet and tell them what to expect after vaccination. Instruct the parent how to hold their young child and encourage them to help with distractors.

Make sure to give the child some control during the appointment. Talk to them directly and answer their questions. Be honest, explain that shots can pinch or sting, but that it won't hurt for long. Remind the child that vaccines can help keep him or her healthy. Ask them questions like, which arm would you like your shot in, rather than asking them about things they can't control like, do you want a shot? Let the child know they can be loud, but they need to sit still and cannot move. Support the child if he or she cries and never scold them for not being brave.

Use distracting techniques to help decrease the child's pain and anxiety. Distract them with things like singing or talking softly, pointing out interesting things in the room, telling or reading stories, taking deep breaths with the child to help "blow out" the pain, wiggling all ten toes, and squeezing a parent's hand as hard as they can.

Setting up your environment is another key factor when providing vaccinations to children and families. Families may come with multiple children and therefore it's important to promote a family friendly environment. Consider how the room and vaccination location set-up can reduce the "fear factor" of other children watching what is happening before it's their turn. Privacy screens and cots should be available. Don't draw up the vaccine in front of the child, instead have a clean area to mix and draw up the vaccine out of the child's view. Younger children may cry, scream, and try to run away, so a private place for vaccination such as an exam room may be necessary. Privacy may also be needed for children needing an intramuscular injection in their thigh instead of their arm. Having books, pictures, bubbles, and other items available that can be used to distract children is also helpful. And lastly, consider having juice and crackers on hand for children who may become lightheaded.

Positioning is a prime consideration when vaccinating children. While older children may be comfortable sitting in the chair with their parent close by, younger children should sit in a parent's lap using one of the recommended comfort holds. Research has shown that children are less fearful when sitting up rather than lying down. MDH and CDC have tips on how to hold your child during vaccinations ([How to hold your child during a vaccination \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/comforthold.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/comforthold.pdf) and [CDC: How to Hold Your Child during Vaccinations \(www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/holds-factsheet.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/holds-factsheet.html)) and videos showing different comfort holds (CDC's [Comfort and Restraint Techniques \(www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1dGpTCgerE\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1dGpTCgerE)). Links to the MDH videos can be found on the [Preparing to Vaccinate Young Children \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/pedstips.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/pedstips.html) webpage.

The vaccine administration site for most children over the age of 3 is the deltoid muscle and for children ages 6 months through 2 years is the vastus lateralis muscle. A 1-inch needle is recommended. If the child is very small or has little muscle mass, a 5/8-inch needle may be used in the deltoid, but the skin must be stretched flat with the thumb and forefinger before injecting. An ice pack placed on the site for a few minutes before the injection can decrease the pain response for some children. Injection of the vaccine should be rapid, with no aspiration, and rapid withdrawal to minimize the pain response. Having colorful and fun bandages and stickers close by to quickly distract the child after vaccine administration is also helpful. Immunize.org has created a resource that provides an in-depth look at intramuscular administration of vaccines ([How to administer intramuscular and subcutaneous vaccine injections \(www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf\)](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf)).

Vaccinators should be able to identify and respond to adverse events for all age groups they are vaccinating. Administering any vaccine has the risk of anaphylaxis. Young children and adolescents can also faint and feel dizzy. All children should be observed for at least 15 minutes after vaccination. Ensure you have a space for families to wait during this observational period. All adverse reactions and vaccine administration errors should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System ([Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\) \(https://vaers.hhs.gov/\)](https://vaers.hhs.gov/))

Preparing for emergencies should be part of your planning process. Every setting should have proper equipment, medications, and procedures in place to handle an anaphylactic reaction to a vaccine. The Immunization Action Council has created a resource called the Medical Management of Vaccine Reactions in Children and Teens in a Community Setting that includes a table with signs and symptoms and management of different reactions, a protocol and suggested medications and supplies, and a dosage chart for young children ([Medical Management of Vaccine Reactions in Children and Teens in a Community Setting \(www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3082a.pdf\)](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3082a.pdf)). This can be signed by medical director and used as protocol.

In this section you will find links to many of the resources mentioned in this training for administering vaccines to children. Be sure to bookmark each of these resources for future use!

[How to administer intramuscular and subcutaneous vaccine injections \(www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf\)](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf)

[Skills Checklist for Vaccine Administration \(www.immunize.org/catg.d/p7010.pdf\)](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p7010.pdf)

[MDH: How to hold your child during a vaccination \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/comforthold.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/comforthold.pdf)

[MDH: Preparing to Vaccinate Young Children \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/pedstips.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/pedstips.html)

[CDC: You Call the Shots: Vaccines Web-based Training Course \(www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/youcalltheshots.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/youcalltheshots.html)

[CDC: How to Hold Your Child during Vaccinations \(www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/holds-factsheet.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/holds-factsheet.html)

[YouTube: Comfort and Restraint Techniques \(www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1dGpTCgerE\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1dGpTCgerE)

The Minnesota Department of Health wants to thank all healthcare workers who have worked tirelessly during this pandemic and those involved in COVID-19 vaccination efforts. We thank you for your dedication and efforts in working to overcome the devastating effects of COVID-19.



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