

## Back to School Includes COVID-19 Planning

### Making Informed Decisions

Part of going back to school is deciding whether your child should be vaccinated for COVID-19. The Autism Society of Greater Akron (ASGA) wants you to have the information you need to make the best decision. Speak to your child's doctor about what is best and here are also some facts to consider.

### Why should children get vaccinated?

COVID-19 can sicken people of all ages. There is no way to predict how your child might be affected by COVID.

### Which vaccines can my child get?

Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are both approved for children 6 months and up.

The vaccines for children have **the same active ingredients but in a smaller dose** than the vaccines for adolescents and adults.

### Why should children with disabilities get vaccinated?

Many children with disabilities have underlying medical conditions that put them at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

They may also have barriers to accessing healthcare and other characteristics that increase their risk of catching COVID, including:

- Limited mobility
- Higher need for support services
- Challenges practicing preventative measure like masking, social distancing, and hand washing
- Challenges communicating and managing symptoms of infection

### Is it safe for kids with disabilities?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective. Before it was authorized for children, scientists and medical experts reviewed safety and effectiveness data from clinical trials involving thousands of children.

### Tips for a Smooth Vaccine Appointment

#### When You Schedule:

- Request a copy of required forms so you can fill them out before you go.

#### Before You Go:

- Explain the process to your loved one (ASGA has a Social Story we can share)

#### At Your Appointment:

- Bring an activity/fidgets/iPad for waiting times
- Think about sensory needs (ask in advance if they have a quiet room where you can wait)
- Determine if you need a communication board
- Shot blocker can help with pain

#### After Your Appointment:

- Know what side effects to expect
- Set a reminder for when to schedule next appointment

Scan the QR code for shot blocker information, social story, and more!



## When is my child considered fully vaccinated and up to date?

### Moderna

Children 6 months through 17 years old require two doses separated by four to eight weeks.

**Up to Date:** Two weeks after the second dose



### Pfizer

Children 6 months through 4 years old require three doses:

- Second dose is given three weeks after first dose
- Third dose is given at least eight weeks after second dose

**Up to Date:** Two weeks after the second dose



Children 5 years and older require two doses and a booster:

- Second dose is given three to eight weeks after first dose
- Booster is recommended at least five months after second dose

**Up to Date:** Two weeks after the second dose. If five months have passed since the second dose, you need a booster to be up to date.



## What else should I know about the COVID-19 vaccine?



Some people have temporary side effects after vaccination such as headaches or pain or swelling on the arm where they got the vaccine. This is normal and means the body is building up protection against COVID-19.



No vaccine is 100% effective, so it is expected for some people who are up to date on vaccines to get COVID-19. The vaccines are extremely effective at preventing serious symptoms, hospitalization, and death caused by COVID-19.



There is no link between Autism and vaccines (CDC, 2021).