

The Virgin Islands Consortium

CDC Recommends Pfizer's Covid-19 Vaccine For Children as Young as 5, Clearing Path for Jab in U.S. Virgin Islands

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Ernice Gilbert **November 03, 2021**



The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday recommended the use of Pfizer and BioNTech SE's Covid-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11, a move that makes roughly 28 million American children, including those in U.S. territories, eligible for the shot.

Some sites could start administering the drug to children as early as today, though widespread administration will take hold next week. "It will allow parents to end months of anxious worrying about their kids, and reduce the extent to which children spread the

virus to others. It is a major step forward for our nation in our fight to defeat the virus,” said President Joe Biden.

Some parents are expected to vaccinate their children against Covid-19, while many others, wary of safety concerns, will opt to wait.

“As a mom, I encourage parents with questions to talk to their pediatrician, school nurse or local pharmacist to learn more about the vaccine and the importance of getting their children vaccinated,” said CDC Director Rochelle Walensky on Tuesday.

The CDC's decision followed an advisory panel's 14-0 vote in favor of approval of the drug for children. “We have excellent evidence of efficacy and safety,” said Beth Bell, a panel member who is a clinical professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Washington (via the Wall Street Journal). “We have a favorable risk-benefit analysis. We have many parents out there who are really clamoring and want to have their children vaccinated.”

Experts on a panel called the Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee, which has been advising the Food and Drug Administration, [last week](#) voted 17-0, with one abstention to recommend that the FDA approve Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11.

The FDA must clear a vaccine before it can be used outside of testing. A greenlight from the FDA is followed by guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to facilities such as pharmacies and vaccination sites as well as doctors. The CDC also sets policy for vaccine use.

The FDA panel held discussions on the risk of myocarditis, a heart-inflammation condition found in a small number of young men and male teenagers who have received mRNA vaccines. The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna Inc. shots use mRNA technology. There were not cases of myocarditis found in the children's study, however the study was too small to detect the potential risk, according to Pfizer and BioNTech.

While some panel members shared concerns about the risk of myocarditis and other potential side effects, they wanted to make sure that the vaccine was available for children with the highest risk of becoming ill. According to WSJ, earlier in the meeting, U.S. health officials told the panel that two-thirds of hospitalized children have underlying medical conditions.