



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc
Commissioner

August 5, 2021

Dear Families,

As we approach the new school year, people are feeling both excited and nervous about returning to the classroom amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Variants of COVID-19 are circulating in New York City (NYC) that are much more contagious, especially among people who are not vaccinated. As a physician and a parent, I strongly encourage you to get your children ages 12 and older vaccinated as soon as possible.

Monday, August 9 is the last day for children 12 and older to get the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine to be fully vaccinated by school opening on September 13. Currently, Pfizer is the only vaccine authorized by the Food and Drug Administration for children ages 12 to 17. This vaccine requires two doses, three weeks apart, and it takes two weeks from the second shot to be fully vaccinated.

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, free and provided regardless of immigration status. Millions of children under 18 years of age have safely received the Pfizer vaccine. While vaccination is not required for school attendance, vaccination allows children to be in the classroom, participate in afterschool activities and sports, and gather with friends safely. It also provides a more stable learning environment because students who are fully vaccinated currently are not required to quarantine if a student in their class has COVID-19.

Getting your child vaccinated is safe, confidential, and easy. Here's what you need to know:

- Visit nyc.gov/vaccinefinder or call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) to find a vaccination site near you. Many sites do not require an appointment.
- You can request free in-home vaccination by visiting nyc.gov/homevaccine or calling 877-VAX-4NYC. In-home vaccination is available to all New Yorkers ages 12 and older.
- You do not need to provide proof of immigration status or a social security number to get vaccinated. Identification is only required for proof of age. If your child does not have an ID, you can attest to their age at the time of vaccination.
- You do not need health insurance to get vaccinated.
- For people under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must provide consent.
 - Children ages 12 to 15 must be accompanied to the vaccination site by a parent or guardian, or another adult caregiver designated by the parent or guardian.
 - Some sites allow children ages 16 and 17 to go to the site alone, but they still require parental consent in writing or by phone.
- All records and information associated with vaccination are kept strictly confidential.

- Vaccines are administered by trained medical professionals.
- On-site telephone interpretation in multiple languages is available at all City-run sites.
- The City is now offering \$100 for anyone (including children) who gets their first dose at a City-run vaccination site or at home as part of the in-home vaccination program. To find a City-run site, visit the NYC COVID-19 Vax4NYC Appointment Scheduler at vax4nyc.nyc.gov/patient/s/ or call 877-VAX-4NYC. Visit nyc.gov and search **incentives** for more information and to learn about additional incentives.

Pediatricians and other health care providers can help answer questions, and many are able to give the COVID-19 vaccine at a back-to-school check-up, along with other routine immunizations. If you need a provider, call 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692). NYC Health + Hospitals providers give care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.

The [Frequently Asked Questions for Families](#) document has answers to some questions you may have about getting your child vaccinated. This document and other resources and information is available in multiple languages at nyc.gov/covidvaccine.

We deeply appreciate your partnership in keeping our schools and communities safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave A. Chokshi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Dave A. Chokshi, MD MSc
Commissioner of Health
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene