



NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME CONGRESS

NDSC COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ Sheet

Is COVID-19 more dangerous for people with Down syndrome? As of December 2020, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has added Down syndrome to the list of conditions at an increased risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19 (4). According to studies, people with Down syndrome – particularly those who are older, have underlying health conditions, or who live in congregate settings – are 5 times more likely to be hospitalized and 10 times more likely to die from complications of COVID-19 than the general population (2)(3). However, children with Down syndrome have similar outcomes to their peers in the general population.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine recommended for people with Down syndrome? The Down Syndrome Medical Interest Group ([DSMIG](#)), with whom NDSC has a trusted partnership, supports the recommendation that people with Down syndrome receive the COVID-19 vaccine and states, “The vaccine is a safe path to which we can reduce symptomatic COVID-19, save lives, and return more rapidly to the many aspects of our lives that have been altered” (1).

Are children with Down syndrome eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine? The current vaccines available are not recommended for any children under the age of 12 at this point (1). There are some research sites enrolling children down to 6 months old for vaccine trials, so you may want to look for these options in your area if you are interested.

How will the COVID-19 vaccine help? Distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine benefits individuals and will stop the spread of the virus in the community.

- Approved vaccines make it significantly less likely you will get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated may lessen the severity should you get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated will help protect vulnerable people around you, including the elderly, people with disabilities, and those with underlying health conditions (2).

What are the benefits of mass vaccinating?

- Individuals in group homes and congregate settings will be able to reunite with family, friends, and a support network.
- School systems will no longer require remote learning.
- Transition to adulthood programs can fully operate to promote independence and supports.
- Therapies and support services will be able to resume.
- Respite services for caregivers will be possible.
- Suffering industries would recover, creating more job opportunities for those with disabilities to find gainful employment (2).

After someone has received the COVID-19 vaccine, can they stop using safety measures? The vaccine protects the vaccinated person, but though rare, vaccinated people can still get COVID-19 and although hospitalizations for breakthrough cases have occurred, it seems much less likely that a vaccinated person will die from COVID-19 complications. Vaccinated people can still spread the virus to others. Because the rate of infection from the virus varies across the country, to protect yourself and others you are encouraged to refer to your local health guidelines. The CDC encourages those vaccinated to continue to use caution.

You may also reach out to your state's Developmental Disabilities Council, Protection & Advocacy organization, local or state Down syndrome group, or other statewide organizations such as The Arc, which serve people with intellectual & developmental disabilities, to obtain information and join in their advocacy efforts.

SOURCES:

- (1) [IDD COVID-19 Vaccination Position Statement updated May 28, 2021](#)
- (2) [The Autism Society of America and National Disability Organizations Encourage the Autism and I/DD Community to be Prioritized for COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- (3) [COVID-19 is 10 times deadlier for people with Down syndrome, raising calls for early vaccination](#)
- (4) [Certain Medical Conditions and Risk for Severe COVID-19 Illness](#)