



YOUTH VACCINATION AGES 12-15

MESSAGING/TALKING POINTS

May 12, 2021

KEY MESSAGES:

Protection from COVID-19 is within reach for even more of our loved ones. Young people aged 12 and over are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, allowing more Californians to be protected from the virus.

When more Californians become vaccinated, we can feel safer as restrictions are lifted and life begins to return to a sense of normalcy. When 12- to 15-year-olds are vaccinated, families can be safer as they venture out more, go on vacations and get back to doing the things they love.

We can protect our families and community by helping the eligible young people in our lives get vaccinated – enabling them to safely return to fully in-person schooling and hanging out more often with friends.

TALKING POINTS:

- **After clinical trials proved the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective in protecting against severe illness, hospitalization and death in young people aged 12 and over, the FDA granted emergency use of the Pfizer vaccine for this next age group.**
 - Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine was authorized by the FDA for youth aged 12 and over on May 10.
 - After safety reviews by the CDC and the Western States Scientific Safety Review group on May 12, it can now be administered to this next age group in California.
 - Pfizer was the first vaccine to submit trial data for authorization to immunize this age group. Moderna is expected to submit trial data soon.
 - The Pfizer vaccine has already been safely administered to millions of California adults, and 30 percent of 16- and 17-year-olds.
 - This same vaccine and dosage is now authorized for those ages 12-15, similar to the flu vaccine dosage which is the same for adults and children, except for infants.
 - Vaccine trials and approvals commonly begin with older, often more vulnerable populations then extend to younger ages.
 - The Pfizer vaccine was found to be safe for the 12-15 age group with only non-dangerous side effects like fatigue, fever and headache.

- **As grandparents and more of the adults around us become vaccinated, the focus shifts to our younger population as they remain susceptible.**
 - The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) reports that as of May 2021 youth now account for 22 percent of new COVID-19 cases in the U.S., when this time last year youth cases were only around three percent. Since older people are now vaccinated, it is important to get young people vaccinated to prevent new cases from increasing, starting with our 12 to 15-year-olds.

- **With more of our loved ones able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, we can have comfort in knowing young people over age 12 are protected and our communities are moving closer toward immunity.**
 - Less than a month ago, California expanded eligibility to residents 16 and up. Already, more than 30 percent of Californians aged 16 and 17 have received at least one dose.
 - This broadening of COVID-19 vaccine authorization to younger people will build on the success we are experiencing in getting the majority of the population vaccinated.

- **California is ready to safely deliver vaccines to young people aged 12 and over.**
 - The statewide vaccine network has the capacity to administer 2.5 million doses a week to this age group, which doesn't include the vaccinations available at local pharmacies, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and other providers who receive allocations directly from the federal government.
 - California's 12-15 population is about 2.1 million people.
 - Efforts are underway to enroll more vaccinators for adolescents by:
 - Streamlining medical provider enrollment, and
 - Getting the Pfizer vaccine into more doctors' offices by creating local distribution systems that maintain the required storage and transport conditions for smaller quantities of vaccine.
 - The state is also working closely with local health departments, schools, community partners and others to provide vaccines equitably to underserved youth, including those who are experiencing homelessness or in foster care.
 - Youth may be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine along with other routine immunizations in the near future, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and federal ACIP with the CDC.
 - COVID-19 vaccine is free for all Californians regardless of insurance and immigration status, which will not be asked. COVID-19 testing, treatment or vaccinations will not affect anyone's immigration status or be shared with immigration agencies.
 - In some instances, a vaccine provider may request your Social Security Number and/or government ID, but it is NOT required.
 - Call your family doctor or go to [VaccinateALL58.com](https://www.vaccinateall58.com) for more information on the COVID-19 vaccine for young people over the age of 12.
 - Or parents can visit [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://www.myturn.ca.gov) or call 833-422-4255 to schedule an appointment. Availability will increase in coming weeks.

- **Young people have been heroic throughout this pandemic, donning masks and putting their young lives on hold. They have suffered stress and isolation. Now it is their turn to join grandma and grandpa, mom and dad, aunts and uncles, guardians and neighbors, teammates and friends in getting vaccinated.**
 - We can help protect young people against the severity and ongoing threat of COVID-19 by helping them get vaccinated when they become eligible.
 - Vaccinating young people helps to protect their families and communities.
 - Vaccinating young people will help schools function normally and allow more parents to go back to work.
 - It's exciting that more people in our communities can enjoy protection against COVID-19.

- **The more vaccinations get into the arms of eligible Californians, the more we stop the spread and shrink the pool of people vulnerable to COVID-19.**
 - The goal is to minimize the burden of disease in California, which is why every single shot counts. Adding young people 12-15 means we have a segment who are vulnerable potential vectors, or carriers, who will now be able to enjoy the protection the COVID-19 vaccine provides.
 - The state is closely watching regions of California where vaccinations are slow in order to ramp up administration of the shot and create broad-scale protection with vaccination-generated immunity that will help avoid large surges of infection.

- **While things are looking up, it is important to remember that the pandemic isn't over yet.**
 - We need to stay vigilant against COVID-19 and its variants. That means getting vaccinated, encouraging our friends and families to get vaccinated, and helping our young family members get vaccinated when it becomes available for them.
 - By getting vaccinated and encouraging others to get vaccinated, you are protecting yourself and everyone around you.
 - Face coverings are required indoors regardless of vaccination status, except for a few exceptions.
 - For small outdoor gatherings, fully vaccinated persons are not required to wear face coverings while unvaccinated persons are, unless there is room to physically distance.
 - Masks are not required outdoors, except when attending crowded outdoor events where physical distancing is not possible.

- **If you or someone you know is eligible and hasn't yet been vaccinated, choose to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can to protect your loved ones until they can get theirs, too.**

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