

Appointments Open for Vaccinating Children Under 5 at the Mall of America

State run site one of many options for parents, along with pediatricians, local clinics and pharmacies

The State of Minnesota announced that appointments at the state-run Mall of America COVID-19 vaccination site are now open for Minnesota children between 6 months and 5 years old. This follows final authorization of the COVID-19 vaccine for this age group, which was recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over the weekend.

Parents can now book appointments for the Pfizer vaccine at the Mall of America site online. The Mall of America vaccination site is open Wednesdays through Fridays, 1:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Appointments are required for children 6 months to 5 years at the Mall of America, and initial demand is expected to be high. While the state-run Mall of America vaccination site is one option for parents, Minnesota's provider network – primarily large medical systems, pediatricians, local clinics, and pharmacies – will administer most COVID-19 vaccines to children between 6 months and 5 years old because of their expertise caring for young children. Vaccine shipments are expected to arrive to Minnesota providers in waves over the next week.

"This is an important and exciting time for many families as our youngest Minnesotans can now receive important protection against COVID-19 through vaccination," said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm. "We know that even young children can get very sick from this virus, and that's why it's important for all of us to continue doing everything we can to protect our loved ones and our communities from COVID-19. Now is a great time to make sure the entire family is up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines."

Minnesota pediatricians and health care providers also echoed this excitement about today's news.

"Parents and families have been struggling for 2 years to keep their children healthy, and for the youngest ones who couldn't wear a mask, this often meant keeping them at home. But now, our youngest patients from 6 months to 5 years old, will finally be able to receive a vaccine that will help protect them against this virus," said Dr. Sheldon Berkowitz, president of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MNAAP). "MNAAP, representing nearly 1,000 pediatricians around the state, is thrilled to see this day arrived when now all of our children and youth 6 months and older will be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination. We encourage all parents to get their children in for these and any other routine vaccinations they may need, and if they have older children who have also not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19, to bring them in also."

"Parents now have the choice to vaccinate our youngest children against COVID-19 with a safe and effective vaccine," said Dr. Nathan Chomilo pediatrician at Park Nicollet and adjunct assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School. "As a

pediatrician, I look forward to counseling parents of young children on their decision to vaccinate and being able to offer them a way to help decrease the suffering caused by COVID-19.”

“Families can now feel assured that there are safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines to protect our youngest kids from severe illness, too,” said Dr. Gigi Chawla, vice president and chief of general pediatrics at Children’s Minnesota. “The data is remarkably clear that vaccination is the best way to protect our children and communities. As a parent and a pediatrician, I encourage all families to get their eligible kids vaccinated.”

“Many of us—parents and families, child care and preschool professionals, pediatricians and other health care professionals—have been waiting for a COVID vaccine to help protect infants and children 6 months to 5 years of age from this deadly virus. These now well-studied vaccines are a critical addition to families’ toolkits for keeping their youngest children safe,” said Dr. Iris Borowsky, director of the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health at the University of Minnesota and pediatrician at Community-University Health Care Center. “In rolling out this vaccine, we must use all we have learned about centering community and justice to be trustworthy and support vaccine confidence and accessibility.”

“As a family physician, I’m so pleased that our youngest Minnesotans are finally eligible for COVID vaccinations. Vaccinations are an integral tool for keeping kids – and our communities – healthy,” said Dr. Deb Dittberner, president of Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians. “Please connect with your health care provider to discuss your questions about vaccinations. We are here to help you navigate these important decisions and to partner with you to keep your kids safe and healthy.”