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COVID-19: Which countries are vaccinating children?

In May 2021, regulatory bodies around the world began approving the Pfizer vaccine for 12 to 15-year-olds. Since then, different countries have moved at different speeds.

Australia

Children aged 12 to 15 are the latest cohort to become eligible for the Pfizer vaccination. Testing to determine whether COVID-19 vaccination will be extended to younger children is ongoing.

New Zealand

In June, the New Zealand medical regulator gave provisional approval for the Pfizer vaccine to be given to children aged 12 years and older. The national vaccine rollout was not extended to this cohort until mid-August.

Canada

Canada was the first country in the world to approve vaccines for children aged 12 and up. As of mid-August, 58 per cent of children aged between 12 and 17 were fully vaccinated.

US

The vaccine rollout to children aged 12 and up started in late May at sites across the US. By the end of July, 42% of 12 to 17-year-olds had received their first dose and 32% their second dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna shots. Some school districts have voted to make vaccination against COVID-19 a condition of returning to classroom learning. President Biden has indicated that vaccines for younger children (aged five to 12) may be available in the near future.

Denmark

Denmark has now vaccinated most of their child population (12 to 15-year-olds).

Spain

Spain has now vaccinated most of their child population (12 to 19-year-olds) with at least a single dose.



France

France has been moving quickly, with 66% of those aged 12 to 17 now single jabbed, and 52% fully vaccinated. By October the country's health pass – or *pass sanitaire* – will be extended to under-18s, meaning all teenagers will need to show proof of vaccination or a negative Covid test to access places like cinemas, museums, restaurants and indoor shopping centres.

Germany

In June Germany's scientific advisers recommended the vaccine should only be offered to children aged 12 to 15 with underlying health conditions. But in August, after the Delta variant started spreading more widely, the rollout was extended to all those over 12 years old.

Sweden

In Sweden children aged 12 to 15 are only eligible for a vaccine if they have lung disease, severe asthma or another high-risk medical condition.

Norway

In Norway the vaccine rollout was recently extended to children aged 12 to 15, but only a first dose will be offered, with a decision on a second dose to be made later.



Kinship Care in the time of Coronavirus

The Netherlands

The government has expanded its vaccine rollout to anyone aged 12 years and older based on advice from the Health Council of The Netherlands. In July, appointments opened to young people, and the government said it intends to ensure they all get their first dose before the start of the new school year.

United Kingdom

Children aged 12 to 15 are set to be able to get a Covid jab, following advice from the UK's chief medical officers. They have recommended the youngsters should be offered one dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

South Korea

Pfizer has been approved for children aged 16 years and older, while Moderna is available to those 18 years and above.

At this stage, South Korea does not intend on offering vaccines to those aged between 12 and 15 this year.

Israel

Children aged between 12 and 15 have been eligible for the Pfizer vaccine since June. Healthcare providers have been told they can give the Pfizer vaccine to children aged between five and 11 years of age but only if the children had a serious illness that could make them more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Italy

Italy opened vaccinations for people aged 12 and older in early June, and the government wants most teenagers to be immunised before the new school year starts in September.

Japan

Pfizer was approved for use in children aged between 12 and 15 in late May, but the government is still focused on targeting older cohorts that are more susceptible to serious illness and death if they contract COVID-19.

Countries offering vaccines other than Pfizer or Moderna

China began to allow some children from three to 17 years old to be offered shots of a vaccine produced by drug-maker Sinovac, making it the first country to approve a jab for such a young age group. The country has set a rough target of vaccinating 80% of its 1.4 billion population by the end of the year, a figure impossible to meet without vaccinating large numbers of under-18s.

In theory the Covid vaccine is voluntary in China, although some local governments have said that

students will not be allowed back to school this term unless their entire family is double vaccinated.

The Sinovac vaccine is also widely used in many countries in Asia, Africa and South America.

Chile has approved the Sinovac vaccine for use in children from six years old.

South Africa

The country has recently started clinical trials to test the Sinovac vaccine on children aged from six months to 17 years old, however South Africa's vaccine strategy relies mostly on Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer.

India

India is thought to have the largest adolescent population in the world, estimated at about 253 million by Unicef. The latest data from the National Serological Survey suggests about 60% of children have been exposed to coronavirus since the start of the pandemic, and are likely to have built up some immunity from past infection.

In August, the country's drug regulator granted emergency use for a new vaccine developed by local drug firm Zydus Cadila in all those aged 12 years and over, the first approval to cover children. The jab currently needs to be given in three separate doses using a needle-free applicator, rather than a traditional syringe. The firm has said it soon hopes to start trials in younger children aged two and over.

Government scientific advisers have said vaccination for children aged 12 to 17 with serious health conditions could start in October, but a wider rollout will only take place after the adult programme in India is completed, currently slated for the end of the year.

Russia

Russia was the first country to approve a COVID-19 vaccine for use in adults and its rollout relies solely on the Sputnik V vaccine.

Information about the country's rollout is limited, but trials are now being conducted on children.

Sources

"Covid: Which countries are vaccinating children and why? - BBC News" by Jim Reed Health reporter

"Which other countries are giving children COVID vaccines? - ABC News" by political reporter Stephanie Borys