

The vaccine approval process for children under 5

Pfizer and BioNTech are taking steps toward enabling children under 5 to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Here is the timeline of steps to come.

PFIZER AND BIONTECH

1. FDA advisory panel vote

Meeting on Feb. 15

After submitting clinical trial data to the FDA, the next step in the approval process is for the FDA advisory group to meet on Feb. 15. The group of scientists will analyze Pfizer's clinical trial data and compare the benefits and risks for small children.

2. FDA authorization

After FDA advisory meeting

FDA officials will then decide whether to extend the emergency use authorization for the vaccine, NPR reported. The advisory group's vote is considered during this step of the process but is not the determining factor.

3. CDC advisory panel vote

After FDA authorization

Following the FDA decision, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's advisory group will vote on recommending the vaccine to all children within the age group. The advisory group can also recommend if vaccine limitations need to be set for children with underlying conditions.

4. Official CDC recommendation

After CDC advisory vote

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, CDC director, then makes the final decision on whether to officially recommend the vaccine. Shots can't be distributed to pediatricians and pharmacies without the official CDC recommendation.