

# WHO: 'Children Should Not be Vaccinated for the Moment'

By [Megan Redshaw](#)

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*In updated guidance, the World Health Organization said children have milder disease compared to adults and there is not enough evidence to recommend vaccinating children against COVID.*

The World Health Organization's (WHO) [latest guidance](#) clarifying who should get the COVID vaccine states, "Children should not be vaccinated for the moment."

According to the WHO website:

"There is not yet enough evidence on the use of vaccines against COVID-19 in children to make recommendations for children to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Children and adolescents tend to have milder disease compared to adults."

The WHO had previously said vaccinating children against [COVID](#) was not a priority given the limited global supply of doses, [Fox News reported](#).

During a [social media session](#) June 3, **Dr. Kate O'Brien**, a pediatrician and director of the WHO's vaccines department, said children should not be a focus of COVID immunization programs, even as increasing numbers of wealthy countries authorize the shots for teens and children.

"Children are at [a] very, very low risk of actually getting COVID disease," said O'Brien. She said the rationale for immunizing children was to stop transmission rather than to protect them from getting sick or dying.

O'Brien added it wasn't necessary to vaccinate children before sending them back to school safely.

"Immunization of children in order to send them back to school is not the predominant requirement for them to go back to school safely," [O'Brien said](#). "They can go back to school safely if what we're doing is immunizing those who are around them who are at risk."

The U.S., Canada and European Union have all given the green light to some COVID vaccines for children 12 to 15 years old. In the UK, a decision to vaccinate all 12- to 17-year-olds is unlikely to be recommended by experts anytime soon, [BBC NEWS reported](#).

One [argument](#) for not vaccinating children against COVID is they get relatively little benefit from it.

“Fortunately one of the few good things about this pandemic is children are very rarely seriously affected by this infection,” said Adam Finn, who sits on the UK’s Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Infections in children are nearly always mild or asymptomatic, which is in sharp contrast to older age groups who have been prioritized by vaccination campaigns.

A study across seven countries — including the U.S. — [published in the Lancet](#), found that fewer than two out of every 1 million children died with COVID during the pandemic.

Even [children with medical conditions](#) that would raise the risks of COVID infection in adults are not being vaccinated in the UK. Only those at “very high risk of exposure and serious outcomes” are recommended to be vaccinated.

### **For kids, benefits of COVID vaccines don’t outweigh risks**

As [The Defender reported](#), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on June 10 held a meeting to discuss granting [Emergency Use Authorization](#) (EUA) for COVID vaccines for children under 12. Numerous experts spoke out against the plan saying the benefits don’t outweigh the risks for young children.

**Peter Doshi**, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy and senior editor of The BMJ, said during the [open public hearing session](#) there is no emergency that would warrant using EUA to authorize COVID vaccines for children.

Pointing to [Pfizer’s](#) trial of 12- to 15-year-olds which supported the recent EUA, Doshi said the harms outweighed the benefits, and those who had the placebo were “better off” than those who received the vaccine.

In terms of the benefits, Doshi said

“the reported 100% efficacy in Pfizer’s trial was based on 16 COVID cases in the placebo group versus none in the fully vaccinated group. But there were about 1,000 placebo recipients so just 2% got COVID. Put another way, 2% of the fully vaccinated avoided COVID, whereas 98% of the vaccinated wouldn’t have gotten COVID anyway.”

On the other side of the ledger, Doshi said, side effects were common:

“Three in 4 kids had fatigue and headaches, around half had chills and muscle pain, around 1 in 4 to 5 had fever and joint pain. The list goes on. In sum, all the fully vaccinated 12- to 15-year-olds avoided symptomatic COVID but most wouldn’t have gotten COVID even without the vaccine. So, the benefit is small but it came at the price of side effects that were mild to moderate in severity and lasted a few days.”

Doshi [pointed to data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showing 23% of 0- to 4-year-olds and 42% of 5- to 17-year-olds have already had COVID and have robust natural immunity.

[Kim Witczak](#), an FDA consumer representative, expressed great concerns over the premature approval of COVID vaccines for children. Witczak said data shows children are neither in danger or dangerous, and the growing evidence of harm caused by COVID vaccines should not be ignored.

Witczak and Doshi were two of 27 researchers and clinicians around the world who [launched a citizen's petition](#) demanding the FDA withhold full approval of COVID vaccines until efficacy and safety measures are met.

[Dr. Sidney Wolf](#), founder and senior advisor of Health Research Group, also pointed out during the [FDA meeting](#) that CDC data from Jan. 1 to March 31 [showed](#) only 204 hospitalizations and 0 deaths in the 12- to 17-year-old age group due to COVID.

As [The Defender reported](#) May 26, two papers recently published in the journal of Hospital Pediatrics, found pediatric hospitalizations for COVID were overcounted by at least 40%, carrying potential implications for nationwide figures used to justify [vaccinating children](#).

### **COVID vaccine causing heart inflammation in teens**

Dr. Tom Shimabukuro, deputy director of the CDC's Immunization Safety Office, [said during the June 10 FDA meeting](#), "there are 'very few' reports of myocarditis or pericarditis in 12- to 15-year-olds who have been given coronavirus vaccines."

However, the CDC data Shimabukuro presented showed a [higher-than-expected number of cases](#) of heart inflammation among young people recently vaccinated with their second doses of [mRNA vaccine](#). The agency [identified 226 reports](#) that might meet the agency's "working case definition" of myocarditis and pericarditis following the shots.

Among 16- to 17-year-olds through May 31, 79 cases of myocarditis and pericarditis were reported. The expected rate among people in this age group is between two and 19 cases, Shimabukuro said during his [presentation](#).

CDC [data also showed](#) that among 18- to 24-year-olds, there were 196 reports of myocarditis and pericarditis. The expected rate is between eight and 83 cases.

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) scheduled an [emergency meeting](#) for June 18 to update data and further evaluate myocarditis following vaccination with Pfizer and [Moderna](#) vaccines. However, the CDC [delayed the meeting](#) until the June 23-25 ACIP meeting in observation of the Juneteenth National Independence Day holiday. [Register here](#) to watch Wednesday's meeting.

According to the [latest data from VAERS](#), there have been [1,117 cases](#) of myocarditis and pericarditis (heart inflammation) in all age groups reported in the U.S. following COVID vaccination between Dec. 14, 2020 and June 11, 2021. Of those, [109 reports](#) occurred in children 12-to-17-years-old with 108 [attributed](#) to Pfizer.

Another horrifying story! OSU student, elite athlete + member of ROTC developed severe heart complications following his second dose of Pfizer's

COVID vaccine.

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— Robert F. Kennedy Jr (@RobertKennedyJr) [June 21, 2021](#)

Currently, Pfizer's COVID vaccine is [authorized for emergency use](#) in people as young as age 12. Moderna is [authorized](#) for people 18 and older, although the company has asked the FDA to [authorize its use](#) in children as young as 12. Johnson & Johnson's vaccine is [authorized](#) in people 18 and older.

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