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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Kent County Health Department Makes COVID-19 Vaccine Available to Children 5 to 11**

**GRAND RAPIDS, MI. (Wednesday, Nov. 3)** – On Tuesday, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention granted emergency use authorization to the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech for children ages 5 to 11.

As a result of this development, the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) is currently taking appointments for the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for this age group. In addition, extended clinic hours at all locations will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021 and Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021 from 8 a.m. until 11:45 a.m. and from 12:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Appointments can be made for all three KCHD clinic locations during regular business hours by calling (616) 632-7200.

A parent or legal guardian is required to attend the vaccination appointment or send an attestation form with an adult who is at least 18 years old, stating they are legally allowed to sign on behalf of any minor child for the vaccine. This adult should be familiar with the medical history of the child.

“We are tremendously excited to be able to provide this next wave of vaccines to younger children,” says Mary Wisinski, KCHD Immunizations Supervisor. “We have seen an increase in the number of children being infected with COVID-19 since this summer. This vaccine not only protects them, but it will help slow the transmission of the disease in our community. Vaccinating just one child has the potential to save many lives.”

Like the adult version, this vaccine entails two shots of a vaccine, given at least three weeks apart. However, the dose is approximately a third of what adults received. Also, different packaging will be used to guard against mix-ups and smaller needles will likely be used.

Among its findings during clinical testing, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration [found](#) that the Pfizer vaccine was 90.7 percent effective in preventing COVID-19 in children 5 to 11. The vaccine safety was studied in approximately 3,100 children aged 5 to 11 with no serious side effects detected in the ongoing study. Currently, only the Pfizer vaccine has been approved for use in children ages 5 to 11.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).

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On a related note, the Kent County [current school mask mandate](#) will expire 60 days after the the date COVID-19 vaccine is authorized or approved and available to persons in pre-kindergarten through grade six or the infection rate is classified as “low” by the CDC for at least seven consecutive days.

A video that features local physicians answering the most frequently asked questions about the vaccine has been produced by KCHD. It can be viewed [here](#).

Residents are encouraged to visit [vaccinatewestmi.com](http://vaccinatewestmi.com) for additional clinic locations.

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