

Add kids to COVID vaccine trials, pediatricians' group says

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(HealthDay)—Children should be included in COVID-19 vaccine trials at the earliest possible stage, a leading group of U.S. pediatricians says.

If that's not done, youngsters' lives could be at risk, according to the 67,000-member American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

"If we do not add [children](#) to these research trials very soon, there will be a significant delay in when children are able to access potentially life-saving vaccines. This is unconscionable," said Dr. Sally Goza, president of the AAP.

Over a million children have been infected with the new coronavirus since the pandemic began. In addition, children have experienced disruptions to their education and critical medical services, as well as harms to their mental and [emotional health](#), she added.

"It is unjust to allow them to take on these burdens, but not give them the opportunity to benefit from a

vaccine," Goza said in an AAP news release.

Goza outlined the group's concerns in a letter to U.S. [health officials](#) in October. The AAP and six other medical groups this week asked health officials for "transparency, scientific rigor, and robust communications to improve [public confidence](#) in a COVID-19 vaccine."

Dr. Yvonne Maldonado, chair of the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases, said, "We eagerly anticipate seeing the safety and efficacy data in [vaccine trials](#) that are underway in adults, and urge [pharmaceutical companies](#) to rapidly expand their participant panels to include children and adolescents."

This research takes time, she explained. If kids aren't enrolled soon, it will be less likely a vaccine will be available for children before the next school year, Maldonado said.

"Children are not little adults. We must include children in the trials as soon as it is safe to do so. Assuming that one or more of these vaccines are shown to be safe and effective in adults, in order for parents to be comfortable giving these vaccines to their children, we must have studies showing they are safe and effective in children as well," Maldonado explained.

It's known that children can be infected with COVID-19 and can transmit it to others. "To reduce the spread of this virus and control the pandemic as well as for their own safety, it's crucial that children be included in the national vaccination program," Maldonado said, "and that vaccines are made available to children as soon as possible."

More information: For more on kids and COVID-19, go to the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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