



# Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson  
José R. Romero, MD, Secretary of Health

October 28, 2021

Dear COVID-19 Vaccination Provider:

Following the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendation for use of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Pediatric Vaccine for persons 5 to 11 years of age, anticipated to be in place on November 3, 2021, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) will distribute the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Pediatric Vaccine to pediatric vaccination providers who are enrolled in the COVID-19 vaccination program. Our goal is to ensure the vaccine is widely accessible throughout the state to achieve maximum uptake.

Please be aware that the new Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Pediatric Vaccine will be a new preparation with new packaging and new national drug code. It will be packaged in 10-dose vials with 10 vials per box. The new storage requirements are noteworthy: Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Pediatric Vaccine should be stored in refrigerators at 2°C to 8°C (for up to 10 weeks) or Ultra Low Temperature freezers at -80°C (for up to 6 months). In contrast to the adult formulation, the pediatric vaccine is not to be stored in freezers -25°C to -15°C.

The following guidance is to update Arkansas's COVID-19 vaccination providers regarding the ordering process for obtaining the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 pediatric vaccine based on the planned distribution of vaccine allocated to Arkansas.

ADH will focus on distributing the first available COVID-19 pediatric vaccine doses to the Vaccine for Children (VFC) providers who are enrolled in the COVID-19 vaccination program. They currently serve the majority of the pediatric population in Arkansas.

- The first shipments of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 pediatric vaccine are anticipated to arrive in "waves" during the week immediately following the FDA's EUA. The minimum order size available to ADH for that week will be 300 doses. Thereafter, the minimum order size will be 100 doses.
- The number of vaccine doses distributed to each county will be based on the population of children aged 5-11 years residing in each county. We recognize the need for some flexibility because many children receive their health care in counties where they do not reside.
- The first wave will be sent to 50 ADH local health units (LHU) who will redistribute the vaccine to remaining LHUs throughout the state. There are 13 counties in Arkansas where the LHU is the only VFC provider.
- The next wave of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 pediatric vaccine will be sent to seven ADH LHUs with ultra-low temperature (ULT) storage capability, which will serve as hubs for each public health region. These hubs will redistribute vaccine to LHUs in each county which will in turn supply vaccine to the enrolled VFC providers initially followed by non-VFC COVID-19 vaccine providers engaged in vaccinating children aged 5-11 years.

- Beginning on November 1, VFC COVID-19 vaccination providers will notify their LHU contact or LHU Administrator (if they do not already know their LHU contact) of the number of Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric COVID-19 vaccine doses they are requesting for their clinic for a two-week period.
  - The LHU contact will notify their regional hub of the amount of vaccine requested for each VFC COVID-19 provider, and the hub will transfer the appropriate number of doses to the LHU.
  - The LHU and the local VFC provider will work together to arrange for transport of the vaccine to the VFC provider. VFC providers will need to be prepared to pick their doses up at the LHU using appropriate coolers and data loggers. This process will be similar to the current process used for providing the adult formulation of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to clinics for their adolescent patients.
    - Vaccine transportation is a crucial part to the redistribution plan and the recommended storage and handling of the vaccine must be maintained throughout the transport. We want to emphasize that each clinic should have a sufficient supply of materials needed to transport the requested amount of vaccine—including an appropriate cooler and digital data logger. Please refer to your clinic’s vaccine management plan.
  - The LHU will complete a vaccine transfer in WebIZ to the requesting provider, and the requesting provider must accept the transfer in WebIZ for vaccine inventory accountability. All providers receiving pediatric doses must also report their inventory in Vaccine Finder.
- 5) Beginning on November 8, non-VFC providers will notify their LHU contact to request doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 pediatric vaccine. The same processes will be followed as those for the VFC COVID-19 vaccination providers.

All COVID-19 providers should review the Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit before managing any vaccine. Click on the link [Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/downloads/pdf/11-1617.pdf) to review. Providers should review the [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine: Transporting Vaccine for Vaccination Clinics Held at Satellite, Temporary, or Off-Site Locations Procedure \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/downloads/pdf/11-1617.pdf) before transporting any Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

We at ADH strongly encourage all providers to view the trainings at the following links for the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric formulation. [COVID-19 Vaccination for Children 5-11 Years Old | CDC, Pfizer-Pediatric-Reference-Planning.pdf \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/downloads/pdf/11-1617.pdf) and [COVID-19 Vaccine Training Modules \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/downloads/pdf/11-1617.pdf). Links to additional training and information about all of the COVID-19 vaccines can be found on the WebIZ home page.

Thank you for your continued dedication to vaccinating the people of Arkansas. If you have any questions, please call your Local Health Unit contact or email the ADH Immunization Section at [adh.covid19vaccinationprogram@arkansas.gov](mailto:adh.covid19vaccinationprogram@arkansas.gov).

Sincerely,

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