

Risk Matters: COVID-19 Vaccines



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Ever since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the emergency use of specific formulation (10 mcg/0.2 ml) of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years, reports of mix-ups with the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine formulation intended for individuals 12 years and older (30 mcg/0.3 ml) have been pouring in.^[1] For example, in December, a Tennessee mother was interviewed by a Nashville television news station because her 11-year-old child erroneously received the adult dosage of the Pfizer vaccine at a chain drug store.^[2] She cautioned other parents to be on the lookout for potential COVID-19 vaccine errors and had filed a complaint with the Tennessee Board of Pharmacy. Of note, the mother in the story is a pharmacist. It is unknown what, if any, effect receiving the wrong vaccine/dosage will have on children, but practitioners should take precautions and have a protocol in place to avoid this type of mix-up. Although the Pfizer vaccine vials are similar, the vaccine vial for children ages 5 to 11 has an orange cap, and the vaccine vial for older patients has a purple cap.

[1] Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) - National Alert Network (NAN), Dec. 6, 2021

[2] [Child receives adult-sized COVID-19 vaccine by mistake \(newschannel5.com\)](https://www.newschannel5.com)

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