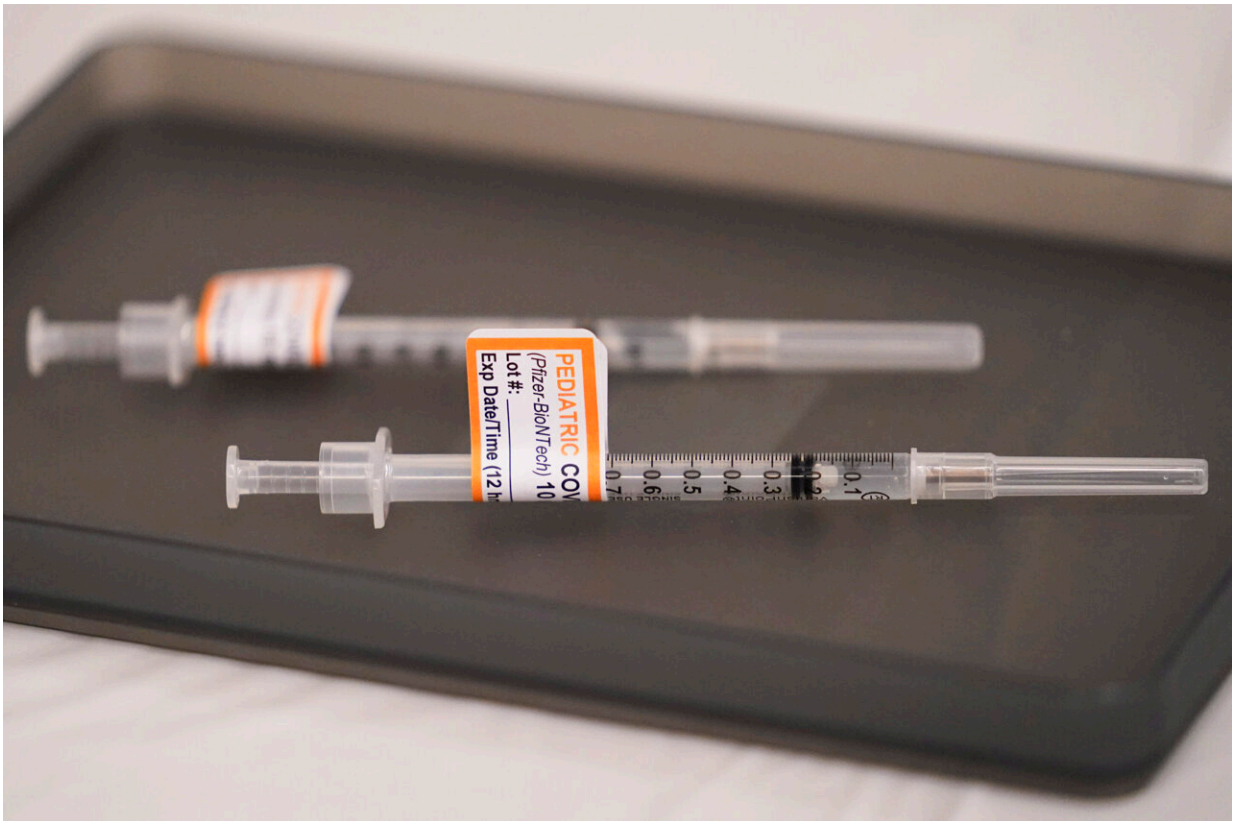


White House: 1st shots for kids under 5 possible by June 21

June 2 2022, by Zeke Miller



Prepared Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine syringes for children ages 5 to 11 and adults are displayed on a table at Northwest Community Church in Chicago, Dec. 11, 2021. The Biden administration said Thursday, June 2, 2022, that children under 5 may be able to get their first COVID-19 vaccination doses as soon as June 21, if federal regulators authorize shots for the age group, as expected. Credit: AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh, File

The Biden administration said Thursday that children under 5 may be able to get their first COVID-19 vaccination doses as soon as June 21, if federal regulators authorize shots for the age group, as expected.

White House COVID-19 coordinator Ashish Jha outlined the administration's planning for the last remaining ineligible age group to get shots. He said the Food and Drug Administration's outside panel of advisers will meet on June 14-15 to evaluate the Pfizer and Moderna shots for younger kids. Shipments to doctors' offices and pediatric care facilities would begin soon after FDA authorization, with the first shots possible the following week.

Jha said states can begin placing orders for pediatric vaccines on Friday, and said the administration has an initial supply of 10 million doses available. He said it may take a few days for the vaccines to arrive across the country and vaccine appointments to be widespread.

"Our expectation is that within weeks every parent who wants their child to get vaccinated will be able to get an appointment," Jha said.

The timeline would provide parents with the opportunity to get their children fully vaccinated in time for the beginning of the next school year.

The Biden administration is pressing states to prioritize large-volume sites like children's hospitals, and to make appointments available outside regular work hours to make it easier for parents to get their kids vaccinated.



White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Ashish Jha speaks during the daily briefing at the White House in Washington, Thursday, June 2, 2022.
Credit: AP Photo/Susan Walsh

In the view of the White House, eliminating the last significant cohort not yet eligible for vaccines will go a long way in building confidence among some Americans who have been wary to return to many of their pre-pandemic activities, helping the country emerge from the pandemic.

Jha acknowledged the "frustration" of parents of young children who have been waiting more than a year for shots for their kids.

"At the end of the day we all want to move fast, but we've got to get it right," he said.

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