

Can my kids hug their grandparents now that they're vaccinated?

March 30 2021, by Dr. Corinn Cross



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Q: My parents have had both doses of the COVID vaccine. Can my kids visit them and safely hug them?

A: If your children's grandparents have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 for at least two weeks, then it is probably safe to let the hugs begin.

Many families have been keeping a [safe distance](#) from vulnerable [family](#) members such as grandparents since the pandemic began. With more people becoming fully vaccinated, we are starting to be able to get back to small in-person visits, complete with long overdue hugs and cuddles.

The COVID-19 vaccines are amazingly effective at preventing severe COVID-19 infections – those that lead to hospitalization and death. Although vaccinated people may still be able to get COVID, the symptoms they experience will be more like a mild cold.

COVID-19 vaccines are not yet approved for anyone under age 16. However, the likelihood of a child who seems well actually having COVID and then passing it to an adult has always been relatively low. Now, with those adults being fully vaccinated, there is relatively no risk of those adults becoming severely ill with COVID even if they were to be exposed.

While we wait for a vaccine for young children and as more older people get the COVID-19 vaccine, it's important to remember that although the risk of giving grandparents COVID has decreased, there are other illnesses out there that we can still pass to one another, including colds and the flu. Washing hands and staying home when we aren't feeling 100% are good rules to continue to follow.

If you or your child are coughing or have cold-like symptoms, or have had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours, it is best if you stay home until you have been symptom-free for a day before visiting friends or family.

When it's time for a visit, you also should take these common-sense precautions:

- Avoid large family gatherings until all adult family members have been vaccinated. It's tempting to want to have a big family reunion after a year of avoiding close contact, but until all adult family members have immunity, it is better to keep gatherings small.
- Although vaccines are quickly becoming available to a larger part of the population, more people need to be vaccinated to reach herd immunity. Herd immunity, also known as population immunity, is the indirect protection from an infectious disease that occurs when a population is immune, either through vaccination or immunity resulting from previous infection.
- Limiting your exposure to crowds and large numbers of people is still advised until herd immunity is reached. This can be done by keeping gatherings small and, if possible when traveling, choosing to drive instead of fly.
- Vaccines take time to work. You are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the last dose, so wait until that time to see the grandparents. Fully vaccinated means two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
- Good hand hygiene is always a smart idea. Your best bet is to wash your child's hands with warm water and ordinary soap for 20 seconds.
- If you have had a known COVID-19 exposure, you still need to follow the guidelines of your local health department and self-quarantine for the recommended period of time.

Being physically separated from grandparents during the pandemic has

been tough for many families. In addition to providing [unconditional love](#) and support for children, many grandparents play a vital role in helping parents care for them.

Reconnecting with family members will be very important as more people get the [vaccine](#). After the [grandparents](#) and other loved ones are fully vaccinated and you and the kids are feeling healthy, then a great big mask-free hug is just what the doctor ordered!

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