

## All Teenagers Now Able to Get COVID-19 Vaccinations in Metro Region

This month, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) expanded the emergency use authorization (EUA) of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to include 12- to 15-year-olds. This week, OSF HealthCare expanded its vaccination program and began providing doses of this vaccine to kids and teens in this age group in the Metro Region, which includes the southwest side of Chicago and surrounding communities.

“We are really happy to be able to do this so that we get a little more herd immunity in our community. These kids want to go out and play soccer, do their sports, go to camps – and we are grateful that we are able to now offer them the vaccine,” said Cheryl Wesolowski, manager, OSF Medical Group, Metro Region.

Fourteen-year-old Darrell Burns, Jr. was the first in line.

“I’m feeling pretty good. A little bit anxious to get the vaccine, but my dad got it, my mom got it. My mom is a nurse. For many people it seems scary but I really don’t think it will be,” said Burns, Jr.

After receiving his first dose, Burns said it was a breeze and was eager to play in his team’s upcoming baseball game. He was accompanied by his father, who says this is another step in the right direction and provides hope that the end to this pandemic is in sight.

“It’s important because we are trying to keep everybody safe, and the more people that get the vaccine the safer everybody will be. I got it. My wife got it. And we wanted to make sure that he gets it actually so that he can go visit his grandparents who he hasn’t been able to see much of. I just think that it’s the right thing to do and it is the thing to do for everybody to be safe,” explained Darrel Burns, Sr.

Marshall Mays is an OSF HealthCare nurse who is working the COVID-19 vaccine clinic. Mays administered Burns Jr.’s vaccine, and is optimistic that pediatric patients will continue to get vaccinated.

“It really gives parents reassurance when they send their kids back to school that they will be safe among their peers, so it’s a step forward to get back to normal – or our ‘new’ normal,” Mays said.

Additional pediatric COVID-19 vaccine clinics will be held in the Metro Region. Those who are 12 to 17 years old must either be accompanied by an adult or bring a completed [consent form](#) to their appointment. You do not need to be an OSF HealthCare patient to register. View openings and [register online](#) in advance for yourself or your child at [www.osfhealthcare.org/vaccine](http://www.osfhealthcare.org/vaccine).

“We’re glad that we are able to do this right here in the community where our patients live. It is easy access and we have convenient hours. They can bring their kids right after school to come in and get the vaccine. So it’s convenient and easily accessible,” Wesolowski added.

OSF HealthCare is proud to have the opportunity to vaccinate our patients and community members but does rely on the vaccine rollout plan from local health departments, which determine how many vaccine doses OSF receives. Delays in vaccine shipments may require appointments to be rescheduled due to a lack of inventory. Local health departments, public vaccination sites, and retail pharmacies are also providing vaccines by appointment.

OSF HealthCare urges everyone to get vaccinated when they can, to have patience when scheduling an appointment, and to continue to practice [COVID-19 safety measures](#) during this time.