

# HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT VACCINES

## ASK AND LISTEN

Invite your child to share what they have heard about COVID-19 vaccines and listen to their responses. It is important to be fully engaged and take any fears they have seriously. Be patient, the pandemic and misinformation has caused a lot of worry and uncertainty for everyone. Let them know that they can always talk to you or another trusted adult (such as a teacher) about their concerns.

## BE HONEST

Children have a right to know what is going on, but it should be explained to them in an age-appropriate way. Keep in mind that kids take their emotional cues from adults, so even if you are worried for your little one knowing that they might be uncomfortable, try not to overshare your fears with your child. Below are some responses to questions your child may have.



### What is a vaccine?

A vaccine is like a shield that protects you from an illness.

### How do vaccines work?

Vaccines teach your body how to fight off illnesses. They do that by putting a tiny piece of the germ that causes the illness you need protection from (or something that looks like the germ) inside your body, so your body can learn what it needs to do to fight it off. This way if you ever come into contact with the illness your body knows exactly what to do, which stops you from getting sick.

### Are vaccines safe?

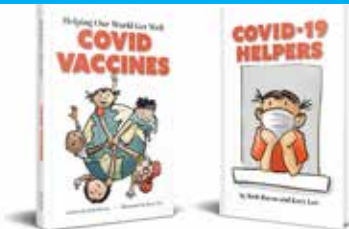
Yes, vaccines are very safe! Millions of children (and adults!) get vaccinated every year, which helps protect them from lots of diseases. When we get a vaccine, we might get a temperature or some aches, but this doesn't last long and is many times better than getting sick from the illness. These signs also show that the vaccine is working and your body is building up the protection it needs to fight the disease.

### I'm scared of shots! Do I have to get one?

I understand how you're feeling, but here's the thing: It'll be over in the blink of an eye! You'll feel a quick pinch and then all done, just like you did for other vaccines. When and if it's time for children to be vaccinated, we'll practice what it's like at home before we go to your appointment.

unicef 

for every child



This text was taken from the UNICEF website on 9/30/2021, for an update visit: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org). This document was created by Beth Bacon, author of *HELPING THE WORLD GET WELL: COVID VACCINES* (ISBN 978-1949467741) and *COVID-19 HELPERS* (ISBN 978-1949467604). Find more at [www.BethBaconAuthor.com](http://www.BethBaconAuthor.com).