



It's important to understand what the vaccine is, how it works, and why we're doing it. From a public health approach, you need to protect not just yourself, but everyone else.

Kimberly Spates
NorthPoint's Chief
Operations Officer



Should I Vaccinate My Teen?

Mother & Daughter Share Why They Chose to Be Vaccinated

NorthPoint's Chief Operations Officer, Kimberly Spates, and her 15-year-old daughter, Stayci, share why they felt it was especially important for their family to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

NorthPoint: How did you approach the conversation with your family about getting vaccinated?

Kimberly: Adolescents really need to engage with other young people. It's important for their development. Stayci plays sports and is on the basketball team at school. It's important to her. They are continuing to play in tournaments this summer, so she's around a lot of people. However, she has asthma. And both of her parents have some health concerns as well. Those are the things we thought about as a family when the vaccine became available to teens. We wanted to make sure everyone in the household is safe.



**Getting Vaccinated ...
Trusting Science**

Stayci: I wanted to get vaccinated so I wouldn't have to worry about getting my friends sick, or getting sick while I was playing basketball. We used to have to wear masks to practice and play. I wanted to make sure I was vaccinated before I took my mask off so I wouldn't get sick. I got my vaccine the week after they changed the age limit (down to 12 years of age). For me, I knew I could protect myself and other people. With my friends, we didn't hang out until we were all vaccinated.

We all encouraged one another to get vaccinated so we can get back to our normal lives. Getting the vaccine was really, really easy. My arm was sore for a day or two, but I played basketball the next day.

NorthPoint: What would you say to other parents who are thinking about getting their teens vaccinated but may have some reservations?

Kimberly: Do your research and talk to your primary care provider. It's important to understand what the vaccine is, how it works, and why we're doing it. From a public health approach, you need to protect not just yourself, but everyone else. I think that kids naturally have a more intrinsic approach to wanting to help other people, although they may not think or talk that way about it.

When you have the conversation with your kids you can say, "After we're vaccinated, then we can go see Grandma." We didn't want to go see my parents until we were all vaccinated. They're 70, in the high-risk category. As a parent, it's always important to do our best to educate and provide options, such as, "If you don't want to get vaccinated, this is what this means for you and the family." Always encourage your child to really think about their own health and how it impacts others. At first, I didn't want to get the vaccine either. But it really came down to my mother, who was having some health issues. It's also the process of thinking about how my health can be impacted by someone else's health.

We have really good staff here who do a good job administering the vaccine and making people feel comfortable. We have staff who are reflective of the community, and having volunteers who come and help us and look like our community also helps people to feel at ease when they're here.

Since school has been out we've seen an increase in the numbers of young people who are coming in for vaccinations. We still need more teens and young adults to get vaccinated so we can get to that 70% - 80% herd immunity so we can be prepared for the next variant.

A Bright Future

Stayci says she is looking forward to an upcoming basketball tournament in Iowa. It will take place on her 16th birthday. She's looking forward to it and is confident that being vaccinated will protect her, her family, and those around her. Happy Sweet 16, Stayci!

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