

Virginia Pharmacy Gave Wrong COVID Vaccine Dosage to Children 5-11

Ted Pharmacy In Loudoun County can no longer provide COVID-19 vaccines after health officials say more than 100 children were given the wrong dosage

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The health department in Loudoun County began administering COVID-19 shots to children ages 5 to 11. News4's Justin Finch reports what parents in the area need to know.

A pharmacy in Loudoun County, Virginia, gave the wrong COVID-19 vaccine dosage to some children, worrying parents and leading health officials to send out a warning to families Wednesday.

Ted Pharmacy, located in a building on Stone Carver Drive in Aldie, admitted to giving children 5-11 a dose of the vaccine meant for people 12 years and older. The Virginia Department of Health said about 112 children in Loudoun County are affected.

Dasha Hermosilla told News4 a pharmacist at Ted Pharmacy gave her daughter, 7-year-old Gryffin Fahle, a diluted dose of the vaccine for people 12 and older, which comes in a vial with a purple cap, not the orange cap of the vaccine meant for younger children.

She said the pharmacist told them it was OK. But a simple Google search later confirmed Hermosilla's fear that it was not.

"Nothing says that you can change a purple to an orange," Hermosilla said. "I had this pit in my stomach that, like, what did they just do to my daughter?"

Hermosilla wasn't the only parent asking that question. Another mom sent News4 a screengrab of a Facebook conversation in which the pharmacy admitted to the mistake and apologized for the "inconvenience."

"The way they have dealt with individuals is really, like, 'Oh, it's no big deal,'" Hermosilla said. "There are dozens and dozens of families out there that don't even know that this is an issue."

State health officials told parents the Virginia Board of Pharmacy has opened an investigation, but the agency would neither confirm nor deny that when News4 inquired.

After News4's interview with Hermosilla, the Loudoun County Health Department released an alert about the pharmacy's error.

"The pharmacy who administered the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination to your child last week has been removed from both state and federal COVID-19 vaccination programs," Loudoun County Department of Health Director David Goodfriend said in the letter.

The health department said parents of affected children should first consult with their child's pediatrician to decide the best course of action.

If a lower dosage of the vaccine meant for people 12 and older is given to younger children, parents can wait 21 days to restart the correct COVID-19 vaccine series, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Parents can either wait the 21 days or proceed with getting the second dose as scheduled, ensuring it is the correct vaccine with the orange cap, the county health department said.

Health officials also said parents should watch for side effects of the vaccine, such as fever, chills, fatigue and pain or redness at the injection site and call their pediatrician if their child has prolonged or more serious side effects.

Goodfriend said in the letter that Ted Pharmacy relinquished the rest of its COVID-19 vaccines to the health department.

Below is the full statement a spokesperson for Virginia's Board of Pharmacy gave News4:

Virginia's Board of Pharmacy (BOP) takes seriously the mission of the Department of Health Professions which is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public.

It is important to note under Virginia law 54.1-2400.2, Virginia's health regulatory boards, including the Board of Pharmacy (BOP), are not at liberty to confirm nor deny whether an investigation into a possible violation of a law or regulation is or is not underway.

Should an investigation reveal there is probable cause to believe a law

or regulation was broken an Informal Conference or a Formal Hearing before the board may be held for consideration of possible disciplinary action. The Board's findings of fact and resulting actions are contained in a Board Order that becomes a matter of public record available online on the Board of Pharmacy's website under License Lookup and Recent Case Decisions.

BOP licenses and regulates approximately 75,000 practitioners and entities; inspects pharmacy facilities; manages practitioner and patient registration for the use of medical cannabis and regulates the state's five pharmaceutical processor permit holders.