

Vaccine Misinformation Is Spreading Among Kids, Too — Especially On Social Media | Wisconsin Public Radio

By Madeline Fox

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Megan Peña considers herself and her family “very pro-vaccine.” She said she and her husband got their COVID-19 shots when they were eligible, and when her daughter Laila turned 12 in July and became eligible for the Pfizer vaccine, she assumed Laila would be similarly excited for immunization.

“She just was like, ‘No, I don’t want to. I want to be able to have children when I’m older, and this is going to make me not be able to,’” Peña recounted. “I said, you know, ‘That’s not the case, where are you hearing this from?’”

The 12-year-old heard the false but pervasive misinformation that the vaccines affect fertility first from a cousin around her age, but then had it reinforced by videos she saw on TikTok, her mom said.

Children and teens around Laila’s age can be particularly susceptible to misinformation from peers and social media because they’re in a developmental stage where they take more cues from friends, classmates and others their age than from parents or guardians.

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