



5 Things You Need to Know: COVID-19 Vaccines for Children 5-11

We know that you may have many questions you need answered before making a decision. Make sure you speak to your pharmacist or health-care provider about your concerns.

Key Points:

- The Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) COVID-19 vaccine has been approved by Health Canada for children 5-11 years of age.¹
- NACI recommends two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric vaccine at least 8 weeks apart.¹
- The Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric vaccine is safe and effective. Side effects are mild and disappear after a few days.¹
- Vaccinating children can protect your family and prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19 within the community.²
- Vaccination offers more flexibility for travel and gives families a sense of hope and control, thereby returning to regular life sooner.³

1

COVID-19 vaccines are safe & effective

Health Canada has approved the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) (10mcg) COVID-19 vaccine in children 5-11 years of age.¹ It's recommended that children get 2 doses of the vaccine at least 8 weeks apart.¹

All COVID-19 vaccines go through rigorous scientific review to make sure they are safe and effective for children before being approved by Health Canada.¹ The Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric (10mcg) vaccine for children 5-11 years of age uses a smaller dose than for adolescents and adults (30mcg).¹

2

Protect your family & reduce the spread of COVID-19

Most reported cases of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths occur among unvaccinated people.² Canadians under the age of 12 now account for the highest number of new COVID-19 infections.²

Like adults, children who become infected can transmit the virus to others, even if they do not have symptoms. Each child who gets vaccinated helps to protect anyone they come into contact with at home, school and extracurricular activities.²

Getting vaccinated can also help stop other variants from emerging that may be more severe or more easily spread from person to person.²

3

Risk of serious illness for the unvaccinated

a) *What types of side effects have occurred in children?*

Mild side effects including red arm, tiredness, chills, and muscle/joint pain have been reported in clinical trials.¹ These side effects typically disappear after a few days. Serious side effects such as anaphylaxis or severe allergy are rare. Long-term side effects are unknown. Health officials will continue to monitor the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine.

b) *Myocarditis/Pericarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle and its lining):*

While it is unknown whether these side effects will occur in children, no cases were reported in the initial vaccine trial. Results indicate that longer intervals between the first and second doses of the pediatric COVID-19 vaccine may lower the risk of serious side effects. You may have also heard that some post-COVID-19 symptoms can be quite severe.

One such symptom that may occur in children is called multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), which may result in serious complications requiring intensive care or long-term symptoms.¹

4

Vaccination can help us return to normal

If your school-aged child is fully vaccinated, the likelihood that your child will need to self-isolate at home due to COVID-19 infection is less.³ Children missing school can be difficult for families to juggle and minimizing lost school days will make life easier to manage.

Living through the pandemic has not been easy on any of us. In many ways, the pandemic has had the greatest impact on the social, emotional, and physical well-being of our children, as well as their view of the world and human connections.² Vaccination can give families a sense of hope and control.² It's a way for all of us to be part of the solution on a path to recovery. Vaccination can help get us back to regular life.

5

Boosters, co-administration & special considerations

a) Co-administration with other vaccines:

COVID-19 vaccines for children 5-11 years of age should **not** routinely be given at the same time as other vaccines (live or non-live).¹ As a precaution, it has been suggested that other vaccines should be separated from the COVID-19 vaccine by at least 14 days. Speak to your health-care provider to discuss when exceptions to this recommendation may be appropriate.

b) Completing the primary series for children turning 12 years of age:

- Children who receive the pediatric (10mcg) COVID-19 vaccine for their first dose and who have turned 12 years of age by the time the second dose is due may receive the adult (30mcg) COVID-19 vaccine to complete their primary series.¹
- If the second dose of pediatric (10mcg) COVID-19 vaccine is given, that dose is still considered valid, and the primary series complete.¹

c) Third booster dose:

At this time, no recommendations for pediatric third and subsequent pediatric booster doses have been made.¹ For additional updates, please go to the [NACI website](#).

d) Your child cannot get the pediatric COVID-19 vaccine if:²

- They have a fever, are sick with COVID-19 symptoms, currently have COVID-19, or been instructed to self-isolate.
- They have an allergy to any ingredient in the vaccine or have had previous severe reaction to this vaccine.

References:

1. National Advisory Committee on Immunization. *Recommendation on the use of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (10 mcg) in children 5-11 years of age* [internet]. November 19, 2021. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendation-s-use-covid-19-vaccines/pfizer-biontech-10-mcg-children-5-11-years-age.html>. Accessed November 22, 2021.
2. Halton Region. *COVID-19 vaccines* [internet]. Available from: <https://www.halton.ca/For-Residents/Immunizations-Preventable-Disease/Diseases-Infections/New-Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccines>. Accessed November 22, 2021.
3. Government of Canada. *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks* [internet]. November 12, 2021. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html>. Accessed November 22, 2021.