



Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID-19 Vaccine for Youth (Age 12 to 17)

Why should I get the vaccine?

The vaccine will protect you from getting sick from a COVID-19. While most youth experience mild symptoms from COVID-19, or none at all, some can get very sick and may even need hospital care. The vaccine will also prevent you from spreading the virus to other people, such as your friends and family, and help reduce virus spread within your community.

What happens if I don't get the vaccine?

If you don't get the vaccine, you will be at greater risk of getting sick from COVID-19 and spreading it to other people, such as your friends and family.

Who can get the vaccine?

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has been approved in Canada for youth 12 years of age and older (born in 2009 or earlier). If you are turning 12 in 2021, you can get the vaccine.

I've already had COVID-19. Do I need to get the vaccine?

Yes. Immunity from having COVID-19 may not protect you for very long. It is possible to get COVID-19 again. It's better to get the vaccine to stay protected.

How does the vaccine work?

The vaccine teaches our immune system how to make antibodies that protect us from the COVID-19 virus. After vaccination, your body will be able to recognize the real virus and be able to make antibodies to fight the infection. The vaccine doesn't contain the virus, so you can't get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. The vaccine has been tested and results showed that the vaccine is safe and effective for youth 12 years of age and older. It's safe for those with a health condition including diabetes, asthma, allergies or a weak immune system. It's also safe for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.



What is in the vaccine?

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine contains messenger RNA (mRNA), the medical ingredient that boosts our immune system to protect us. The vaccine also contains non-medical ingredients including lipids (fats), salts, sugars and buffers – these help to get the mRNA into our cells to do its job. The vaccine does not contain eggs, gelatin (pork), gluten, latex, preservatives, antibiotics, or aluminum.

I have allergies. Can I get the vaccine?

Allergies to the COVID-19 vaccines are rare. The vaccines are safe, even if you have food, drug or environmental allergies. Speak with your health care provider first if you are allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG).

Does getting the vaccine hurt?

The COVID-19 vaccine will feel similar to other vaccines you may have received. Most people just feel a pinch from the needle.

Are there any side effects?

Some people will have side effects after getting the vaccine. Most are mild to moderate, and last 1 to 3 days. Side effects usually mean that the vaccine is working to build your immune system. A nurse at the clinic will monitor you for any reactions for 15 minutes after you get vaccinated.

After I get the first dose, do I really need to get the second dose?

Yes. Two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are required for full protection. It takes at least 2 weeks after each vaccine dose to build protection.

When and where can I get the vaccine?

In Ontario, youth age 12 and older in 2021 (born in 2009 or earlier) can get the COVID-19 vaccine now. Vaccine clinics can be found all over the City of Toronto. Go online to [find a clinic closest to you](#).

Does my parent or caregiver need to come with me?

Parental consent is not required to get a vaccine if you are able to consent on your own. The health care provider giving you the vaccine will make sure that you understand information about the vaccine, why it is being recommended and what will happen if you

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September 2, 2021

accept or refuse vaccination. This is called informed consent. Talk to your parent or caregiver before getting the vaccine, and bring them along for support, if you want.

Do I still need to follow public health measures after I get the vaccine?

Getting vaccinated helps protect you, your family and your community from COVID-19. It will also help bring the number of COVID-19 cases down so that we can get back to the activities we enjoy. However, until more people are vaccinated we have to continue to follow public health measures, such as physical distancing, wearing a mask and washing our hands.

Who should I talk to if I have more questions?

Ask a parent or trusted adult, such as a health care provider, if you have more questions about the COVID-19 vaccine. You can also find more information about the vaccine at www.toronto.ca/covid19 or call 416-338-7600 to speak with Toronto Public Health staff.

Other helpful resources:

COVID-19 Vaccines for Ontario Youth: <https://kidshealthfirst.ca/>