



Pediatric Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine – Children age 5 to 11 November 25, 2021

COVID-19 in Children

COVID-19 is a viral infection that mainly affects the lungs. Most children with a COVID-19 infection will have mild symptoms or none at all. Children can spread COVID-19 to other people, even if they do not have symptoms. Some children can get very sick and may require hospitalization or experience long-term symptoms including feeling tired, trouble breathing, trouble concentrating or muscle aches.

Vaccinating children protects them from serious illness and reduces virus spread within the community. The more children who are vaccinated, the safer school, sports or other activities will be. It will reduce the risk of outbreaks, and prevent closures or disruptions in school and activities.

Pediatric Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Approved for Children 5 to 11 Years

Health Canada approved the Pediatric Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children age 5 to 11 years after clinical studies showed that it is safe and effective for this age group. The vaccine provided over 90% effectiveness against COVID-19 after two doses among 5 to 11 year olds in the clinical trial. Data shows that children develop a strong immune response, similar to young adults. The vaccine was also shown to be safe.

How the Pediatric Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Works

This is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. mRNA vaccines teach our immune system how to make antibodies that protect us from the COVID-19 virus. After vaccination, your child's body will be able to recognize the real virus and be able to make antibodies to fight the infection. The vaccine does not contain the COVID-19 virus, so your child cannot get a COVID-19 infection from the vaccine.

The Pediatric vaccine is a smaller dose (10mcg) than for those age 12 and older. This is because younger children have strong immune systems and need a smaller amount of vaccine to get protected. It takes at least two weeks after each vaccine dose to build protection. Two doses of the vaccine are required for full protection. The recommended spacing between doses is eight weeks.

Side Effects and Risks

Side effects in children are similar to those seen in adults. They are usually mild, and last one to three days. Side effects usually mean that the vaccine is working to build the immune system. Common side effects include:

- redness, swelling or pain where the vaccine was given
- muscle aches
- headache
- chills
- feeling tired
- fever

Myocarditis and Pericarditis

- Is a type of inflammation in different parts of the heart. Rarely, it has been reported after getting the COVID mRNA vaccine in youth and young adults. Most cases were mild and resolved with rest and treatment. When it occurs following a COVID-19 infection, it can be much more severe, even in children.
- It has not been seen in the clinical trials among 5 to 11 year olds.
- Get medical attention if your child develops chest pain, shortness of breath, or palpitations after vaccination, usually in the first week.
- Vaccination is still recommended as the benefits outweigh the risks.

Delay Vaccination

- If your child has a fever or any COVID-19 symptoms, wait until they are feeling better before getting vaccinated.
- If your child has been told to self-isolate because they tested positive or were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, reschedule their appointment for a time when their isolation period is over.
- If your child had Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C) wait at least 90 days after diagnosis before getting vaccinated.

COVID-19 and other Vaccines

- NACI suggests children 5 to 11 years old wait at least 14 days between getting another vaccine and getting the COVID-19 vaccine. This is a precautionary measure and a shortened interval between these vaccines may be given on an individual basis. Talk with a health care provider to discuss your child's situation.

Consult a Health Care Provider

Speak with your child's health care provider or allergist before getting the vaccine if they:

- are on medications that weaken their immune system – you may want to time their vaccination with their medications
- had an allergic reaction within four hours after receiving their first COVID-19 vaccine dose
- have severe allergies to any of the vaccine ingredients

Informed Consent to Get the Vaccine

- Parents/guardians will have to provide consent on behalf of the child.

Continue to Protect Your Child, Yourself and Others

Vaccines are the best form of protection we have against COVID-19. At this time, we must continue to keep a physical distance, wear a mask and clean our hands often, until more people are vaccinated.



For more information: Talk to your health care provider or visit toronto.ca/COVID19

Resource: National Advisory Committee on Immunization. Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 Vaccines