



## **Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 Vaccine for Children 6 Months – Under 5 Years of Age July 26, 2022**

### **Children & COVID-19**

COVID-19 is a viral infection that mainly affects the lungs. Most children who have COVID-19 get mild symptoms. Some children can get very sick and may require hospitalization or get long-lasting symptoms from long-COVID including feeling tired, trouble breathing, trouble concentrating or muscle aches.

Vaccinating children protects them from serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19 variants, including Omicron. The more children are vaccinated, the safer child care, school, and other social activities will be.

### **COVID-19 Vaccines for Children**

Health Canada has approved the pediatric Moderna Spikevax (25 mcg) mRNA vaccine for children aged 6 months to 5 years old. This is currently the only COVID-19 vaccine authorized in Canada for this age group. Children must be 6 months of age or older at the time of vaccination. It is half of the dosage of the Moderna vaccine (50 mcg) offered to children 6 to 11 years of age.

The Pediatric Pfizer-BioNTech is the preferred vaccine for children aged 5 and older. For a child over the age of 5 with a very weak immune system, the Moderna vaccine may be considered. Consult with a health care provider for more information. With informed consent, if a 5 year old received Moderna as their first dose, they may receive the same vaccine for their second dose.

### **Benefits of the Vaccine**

This vaccine is safe and effective, including for children with a health condition, such as allergies, asthma, diabetes or a weak immune system. It provides protection to friends, family and community members they are in regular contact with e.g. daycare, social gatherings, school etc. Getting vaccinated gives longer protection against a COVID-19 infection compared to natural immunity from an infection. It also provides protection from long COVID, even if children get a COVID-19 infection while vaccinated.

### **How the Vaccine Works**

The mRNA vaccines teach our immune system to make antibodies that protect us from COVID-19. The vaccines do not contain the COVID-19 virus, so a child cannot get an infection from the vaccine.

It takes at least two weeks after each vaccine dose to have protection. Two doses are required for full protection. Children who have a very weak immune system should get three doses. The recommended time between doses is eight weeks.

### **Vaccine Ingredients and Allergies**

The Moderna Spikevax mRNA vaccine contains lipids (fats), salts, sugars and buffers. They do not contain eggs, gelatin (pork), gluten, latex, preservatives, antibiotics, or aluminum. These vaccines are safe for children with food, medication or environmental allergies.

Speak with a health care provider if the child is allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG) or tromethamine (Tris). Allergic reactions, including serious reactions (anaphylaxis), are rare. Allergic reactions can be treated and are usually temporary. Get medical help if a child has trouble breathing, or develops hives or swelling in the face and throat.

### **Side Effects and Risks**

Side effects in children are similar to those in youth and adults. They are usually mild, and last one to three days. Side effects usually mean that the vaccine is working.

Common side effects include:

- redness, swelling or pain where the vaccine was given
- headache
- feeling tired
- joint pain and/or muscle aches
- chills and/or fever
- nausea and/or vomiting

Get medical attention if a child has a high fever (over 40°C) or side effects that last more than three days after vaccination.

### **Myocarditis and Pericarditis**

Myocarditis and pericarditis (types of heart inflammation) can occur after a COVID-19 infection and can be serious. No cases of myocarditis or pericarditis were reported following vaccination of children aged 6 months to under 6 years of age in the [clinical trial](#) for the pediatric Moderna vaccine. Get medical attention if a child develops chest pain, shortness of breath, or a racing heart a few weeks after vaccination. Vaccination is still recommended as the benefits are greater than any risk.

### **Wait to Get Vaccinated**

Children with a fever or any COVID-19 symptoms should wait until they are feeling better. If self-isolation is required, children should wait until their isolation period is over. Learn [about when to get vaccinated after having COVID-19](#).

### **Consult a Health Care Provider if child(ren):**

- Takes medications that weaken their immune system – timing of the vaccination and medication(s) may need to be considered.
- Had an allergic reaction four hours after getting their first COVID-19 vaccine dose.
- Has severe allergies to any of the vaccine ingredients.
- Had Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C).

## **Informed Consent to Get the Vaccine**

Parent/guardian [consent](#) is required to get vaccinated.

**For more information:** Talk to your health care provider and visit [toronto.ca/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/COVID19)