



# KIDS 5-11 AND THE COVID-19 VACCINE

## Fact sheet for parents

Approval of the COVID-19 vaccine for children from 5-11 years old is an important milestone in our fight against COVID-19. Below are some common questions you may have about the vaccine and kids. Be sure to speak to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns.

### WHY SHOULD 5-11 YEAR OLD CHILDREN GET THE VACCINE?

- Like adults, vaccinating children from five years of age and above can help protect them from getting COVID-19 and spreading the virus to others, such as younger siblings who are not eligible for vaccination, and vulnerable family members.
- While COVID-19 is often milder in children than adults, it can sometimes make children very sick, especially those with underlying medical conditions, and there is also the risk of longer-term complications.
- With newer strains of the virus emerging, such as the Delta variant, we are seeing more cases of children with COVID-19, and it is important to ensure children have the same level of protection as their family members.

### IS THE VACCINE SAFE FOR CHILDREN?

- Currently, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is the only vaccine available to children ages 5-11 years old.
- Clinical trials were conducted with thousands of children, and the results show that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.
- Vaccines approved in Canada have followed the same extensive testing as every other vaccine. No steps were skipped. Faster funding and worldwide collaboration have meant the vaccines were able to be developed much more quickly. The clinical trials and safety reviews actually took about the same amount of time as other vaccines.
- To date, millions of doses of mRNA vaccines have been given worldwide to individuals aged 12 and up, and the vaccine has an excellent safety record.

## IS THE VACCINE EFFECTIVE?

- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine approved in Canada for children provides excellent protection against the COVID-19 virus, preventing infections and reducing the risk of serious illness and hospitalization.
- The more people who are vaccinated, the harder it is for COVID-19 to spread.

## ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

- Your child will receive a 1/3 of the dose given to adults but may have similar side effects to adults who have received the vaccine. This is a normal sign that their body is building immunity to the virus.
- Some common side effects include soreness, redness, swelling and itchiness where the vaccine was given. Other reactions may include tiredness, headache, fever, chills, muscle or joint soreness, swollen lymph nodes under the armpit, nausea and vomiting. These reactions are typically mild and usually last about two days.
- Some people have no side effects and severe allergic reactions are very rare. You should also know that it is not possible for your child to get COVID-19 from the vaccine, and there is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems.

## SHOULD I BE WORRIED ABOUT MYOCARDITIS AND THE VACCINE?

- The risk of myocarditis following vaccination is very rare. In fact, the risk of myocarditis from a COVID-19 infection is greater than from the vaccine.
- The risk of myocarditis following vaccination is roughly 1 in 100,000. Typically, this condition has been mild to moderate, and people have recovered with or without treatment.



## DO CHILDREN NEED TWO DOSES?

- Yes, currently the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is the only vaccine available to children ages 5-11 years old, and this vaccine requires two doses.
- Make sure you follow up with your child's second dose, as it is meant to boost the effectiveness of the first dose for the longer term.

## WHAT IF MY CHILD IS AFRAID OF NEEDLES?

Many children and adults are afraid of needles and this is perfectly normal. Here are some steps that can help:

1. Let the immunizer know your child is afraid of needles. They are used to helping people in this situation and know how to make them feel more comfortable.
2. Ask your child to take deep, slow breaths.
3. Distract them. Read or sing to them or show them a short video while they receive the shot.



## ONCE CHILDREN FROM 5-11 RECEIVE THE VACCINE, WILL THEY STILL NEED TO WEAR MASKS?



- COVID-19 will become much less of a risk in our communities as more people are vaccinated.
- In the meantime, even after getting the vaccine, it will be important for everyone, including children, to continue to wear masks, wash hands, and maintain other efforts to stop spread of the virus. We need to ensure the safety of those who have not yet been vaccinated, or who cannot get the vaccine.

For more answers to your questions, visit the [BCCDC website](https://www.bccdc.ca) [www.bccdc.ca](https://www.bccdc.ca).