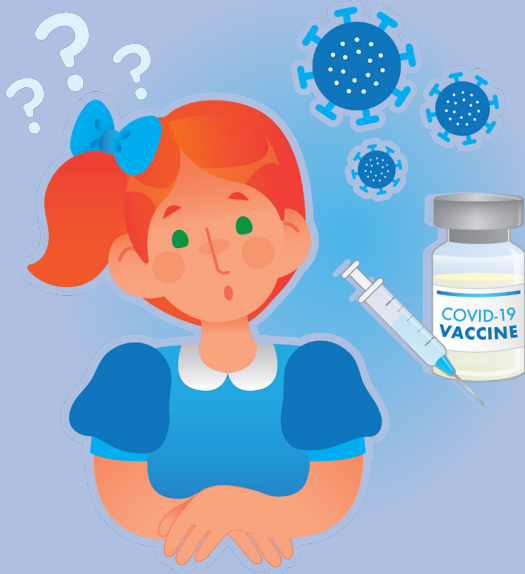


# COVID-19 Vaccines for Children (ages five to 11)



## Can children get the COVID-19 vaccine? If so, which vaccine should they get?

- Yes. Children ages 5 to 11 can receive the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, which include the Pfizer- BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine and the Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Vaccines for children consist of smaller doses of the vaccine compared to the vaccines given to older age groups<sup>2,3</sup>. Vaccine doses are based on age and maturity of the immune system.<sup>4</sup> In clinical trials, these lower doses provided very good protection against COVID-19 for children.<sup>1,2,3,5</sup>

## Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for children?

- In clinical trials, no safety issues were detected when the pediatric formulas of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna Spikevax vaccines were tested on children.<sup>1,2,3</sup> The evidence continues to demonstrate that these vaccines are effective against severe outcomes in children and are very safe.<sup>1</sup> Serious side effects from vaccination also continue to be rare in children.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

## How effective is the COVID-19 vaccine for children?

- Clinical trials showed that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was 90.7% effective in protecting children 5 to 11 years old from COVID-19 infection one week after receiving their second dose.<sup>2</sup>
- Clinical trials showed that the Moderna Spikevax vaccine was 94.1% effective in protecting children 6 to 11 years old from COVID-19 infection two weeks after receiving their second dose.<sup>3</sup>

## How many doses do children need?

- Children ages 5 to 11 years old are recommended to receive two doses of an mRNA vaccine at least 8 weeks apart, as well as a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine<sup>1,2,3,6</sup>. Children five years of age should receive two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine<sup>2</sup>. Children six to 11 years of age should receive two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or the Moderna Spikevax vaccine<sup>1,2</sup>. Children who are moderately to severely immunocompromised should receive three doses, waiting four to eight weeks between each dose, plus a booster shot.<sup>6</sup>

## **Why do children need the vaccine if they are less likely to get very sick from COVID-19?**

- Although children are less likely to experience severe outcomes from COVID-19, the number of children becoming severely ill is increasing due to rising cases in children.<sup>5</sup> Some children who contract COVID-19 may require hospitalization or experience long-term effects.<sup>4</sup> Children infected with COVID-19 may also be asymptomatic and capable of spreading the virus to other populations who may be at greater risk, such as immunocompromised individuals and seniors.<sup>1</sup>
- It is essential that children get fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves and others in their community<sup>1,7</sup>.

## **What are the side effects of COVID-19 vaccination for children?**

- Children experience similar side effects from vaccination as adults, such as redness, soreness and swelling at the site of injection<sup>1,2,3,7</sup>. They may also experience chills, fatigue, joint pain, headache, fever, and muscle aches<sup>1,2,3,7</sup>. Side effects that do occur are typically mild and clear up within a few days<sup>1,2,3</sup>.

## **Do children receive a different vaccine than adults?**

- Yes. Children receive smaller doses of the COVID-19 vaccines than youth and adults receive<sup>2,3,8</sup>. For the Pfizer vaccine, children ages 5 to 11 receive doses of 10 micrograms each, whereas individuals 12 years and older receive doses of 30 micrograms each<sup>2,8</sup>. For the Moderna vaccine, children ages 6 to 11 receive doses of 50 micrograms each and individuals 12 years and older receive doses of 100 micrograms each<sup>3,8</sup>.

## **If my child is turning 12 years old in 2022, should I wait for them to turn 12 and be eligible for the adult dose?**

- No. Children should get vaccinated as soon as possible and receive the appropriate vaccine for their current age, to increase their protection against COVID-19.<sup>4</sup> Children who are currently under the age of 12 should receive the paediatric dose for their first dose<sup>4</sup>. Children who turn 12 years of age between their first and second dose should receive the adult dose for their second dose.<sup>4</sup>

## **Can children receive the new bivalent booster shot by Moderna?**

- No. Only individuals 18 years of age and older are eligible to receive the bivalent booster shot.<sup>3</sup> Children should receive the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty booster shot at least 6 months after completing their primary series.<sup>1,2</sup>

## **What if I have more questions about COVID-19 vaccination for children?**

- Parents and caregivers who have questions about COVID-19 vaccines for children and youth can also visit [www.sickkids.ca/vaccineconsult](http://www.sickkids.ca/vaccineconsult) or call toll-free at 1-888-304-6558 to book a phone appointment with a SickKids clinician.<sup>9</sup> This service is available in multiple languages with the support of an interpreter on the call. You can also speak to your family physician if you have any questions or concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccination for children.

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