



RENFREW COUNTY AND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): COVID-19 Vaccines for Children 5-11

1. What vaccine will children aged 5-11 years old receive?

Health Canada has approved the pediatric formulation of the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 mRNA vaccine for children aged 5-11.

2. Will children aged 5-11 get the same dose as teens or adults?

No. The Pfizer Comirnaty vaccine for children is a lower dose. The vaccine used for children 5-11 years old has 10 micrograms of mRNA, whereas the vaccine used for teens and adults has 30 micrograms of mRNA. Smaller doses of vaccine are often used for children. They work well because children have stronger immune responses than adults.

3. Should children who weigh more, or who are almost 12, get a larger dose?

No. Children who weigh more or who are almost 12 do not need bigger doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccine doses are not based on weight.

4. How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will children receive?

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends that a complete series of the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine (10mcg) be offered to children at least 8 weeks apart between the first and second dose.

***NEW: Children 5-11 years of age are eligible to receive a first booster dose** of the COVID-19 vaccine **at a minimum of three months (84 days)** after receiving their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

5. What is in the Pfizer Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine?

The Pfizer Comirnaty vaccine contains mRNA. mRNA instructs your cells to make the COVID-19 spike protein. A lipid (fat) envelope protects the mRNA while it is getting into cells. The sugars and salts are slightly different in the children's vaccine, so it can be stored in the fridge longer. The vaccine does not contain any COVID-19 virus, it cannot cause a COVID-19 infection.

6. Do mRNA COVID-19 vaccines work for children aged 5-11?

Yes. In vaccine trials, children had a strong immune response to Pfizer Comirnaty vaccine. Children who got 2 doses of the Pfizer Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine had a 91% lower chance of getting sick with COVID-19



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7. What are the common side effects of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in children?

Common side effects are a sore or red arm, tiredness, chills, headaches, and muscle/joint pain. Many children in the trials experienced mild side effects after getting the Pfizer Comirnaty vaccine. Side effects go away after a few days.

8. Is it safe for children to get the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as another vaccine, like a flu shot or another routine vaccine?

Right now, the recommendation is that the COVID-19 vaccine is given on its own. It is best to wait 14 days before or after receiving a COVID-19 Vaccine. This suggested minimum waiting period between vaccines is **precautionary** at this time. If you need other vaccines, your health care provider can help you plan for when to get what.

9. What are serious side effects of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in children?

No new serious side effects were seen in the Pfizer Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine trials for children. Serious side effects, like anaphylaxis (a severe allergy), after mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are rare. Children with allergies to food, drugs, insect stings, or other vaccines can safely get mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.

Inflammation of the heart (myocarditis) and the sac around the heart (pericarditis) can happen rarely after COVID-19 vaccines. These conditions are more likely in young males and after dose 2. They are usually mild and are treated with rest and medication.

10. What are the symptoms of myocarditis and pericarditis?

Symptoms can include chest pain (most common), feeling short of breath and fluttering or pounding of the heart. When these conditions occur after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, symptoms usually start in the first 7 days.

11. How can I support a child who is anxious about vaccines?

The **CARD (Comfort, Ask, Relax, and Distract)** system may help. For more information, please visit the following link https://assets.aboutkidshealth.ca/AKHAssets/CARD_Vaccination_Handout.pdf

12. How can I support a child with disability or specific needs?

Some children will need more support to access COVID-19 vaccines. Children and their guardians can



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Speak with their health care provider to make a plan that fits the child's needs (ie. a longer appointment, a quiet space).

13. Where can I find more information about the COVID-19 Vaccines?

- **Government of Canada – Recommendations on the use of the Pfizer BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine (10mcg) in children 5-11 years of age** - <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines/pfizer-biontech-10-mcg-children-5-11-years-age/pfizer-biontech-10-mcg-children-5-11-years-age.pdf>
- **Government of Canada – Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine: What you should know** - <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/pfizer-biontech.html>
- **Ontario Government - COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario** - <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccines-ontario>
- **Ministry of Health and Long-term Care - COVID-19 Vaccine-Relevant Information and Planning Resources**

