



Labrador - Grenfell  
**Health**

# “COVID-19 Vaccine in Children”

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

## 1. Is the vaccine safe for people over 5-years of age?

The BioNTech Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (also known as Comirnaty) now has a pediatric formula authorized by Health Canada for children 5 to 11 years old. The vaccine was previously shown to be safe in older people last year, and now the studies have completed and confirmed the vaccine was found to be fully safe for younger children. More information about the approval can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/vaccination-children/covid-19.html#a1>. The vaccine is not yet approved for children under 5 years of age.

## 2. How can I assist to ensure my child is comfortable prior receiving the vaccine?

Speak to your child or direct them to someone who can assure they get the facts about the vaccine. Immunizations can be stressful for some children. Speak openly about the importance of protection from COVID-19 through vaccination and share only accurate information about the vaccine.

The Canadian Pediatrics Society has a [good resource on reducing the pain and anxiety of vaccination for children](#). Suggestions include: 1) Plan Ahead: tell children what will happen, how it will feel, what you will do to help their discomfort (say “I will be there to help and comfort you”) and what they can do (e.g. bring a toy); 2) During vaccination position your child comfortably and rub their skin before, during and after the vaccination; 3) Control how you act by staying calm, reassuring your child, using distraction (talk, sing or play with toys) to help it pass more quickly; 4) Don't tell children that it won't hurt, try telling them it might hurt a little but not for long.

Recognize that parental personal stress of vaccination can occasionally be transferred to the child. If you do your best to remain calm and positive about vaccines, your children will as well.



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### 3. Will my child need to get a second dose of the vaccine? Will they have to get it every year?

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination consists of two doses given at least 8 weeks apart. It is very important to get both doses of the vaccine. Some vaccines like the (flu shot) are required every year while other vaccines offer protection of life. The duration of protection for the COVID-19 vaccine is currently being studied with information to follow.

### 4. Can I have the COVID-19 vaccine with other vaccines?

No – the expert body the [National Advisory Committee on Immunizations](#) is recommending that children in this age group wait at least 14 days after getting a different type of vaccine before getting the COVID vaccine. This means that if your child had the flu shot or another school vaccine, they should wait 2 full weeks before getting the COVID vaccine.

**If you book your COVID-19 Vaccine within 2 weeks (less than 14 days) of another vaccine, the vaccine will not be administered and you will need to rebook.**

### 5. After my child receives their vaccination, will they still have to wear a mask?

Because it takes time to build up an immune response and everyone will not be vaccinated at the same time, it is still required to wear a mask in settings where this is required, maintain physical distance, wash hands regularly, and stay at home if ill.

### 6. If my child has, any underlying health issues (ie. allergies, diabetes, asthma) should they be vaccinated?

Vaccination is encouraged and may be more important for them to be vaccinated. However, if a child has a complex health issue such as a weakened immune system you should **talk to your health care provider** prior to the vaccination to discuss the best timing for having the COVID-19 vaccine.



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## 7. Are there any side effects to the vaccine for school-aged children?

Like any medications or supplements (including vitamins), vaccines can cause side effects and reactions. Serious side effects are very rare. After being vaccinated, it is common to have mild and harmless side effects. These may last a few hours or days after the vaccine. Common side effects include:

### **Very common: may affect more than 1 in 10 people**

- injection site pain
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- chills
- joint pain
- fever
- diarrhea

### **Common: may affect more than 1 in 100 and up to 1 in 10 people**

- injection site redness
- injection site swelling
- nausea
- vomiting

### **Uncommon: may affect up to 1 in 100 people**

- enlarged lymph nodes
- feeling unwell
- arm pain

## 8. My child is turning 12 soon. Should I wait for them to get a full dose?

Children should get the vaccine as soon as it is available for them. When you arrive for your appointment, the public health nurse will make sure your child gets the dose that's right for them!

## 9. If my child turns 12 before the second dose, should they get a pediatric dose or an adult dose?

To complete the full series, the second dose of vaccine will be the same that was given for the first dose even if your child turns 12 between dose 1 and 2.