

COVID-19 Vaccines in Children

September 27, 2022



What vaccines are available to my child?

Health Canada has approved two mRNA vaccines for children:

- The Moderna vaccine is for children **6 months – 11 years** old.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is for children **5 – 11 years** old.

Are they safe? What about myocarditis?

Yes, they are safe!

Ongoing safety monitoring shows that COVID-19 vaccination continues to be safe for children. The known risks of COVID-19 and possible severe complications outweigh the potential risks of having a rare, adverse reaction to vaccination.

The risk for myocarditis among patients with COVID-19 was nearly 16 times higher, compared to the COVID-19 vaccine.

Are they effective?

Yes! 2 doses for children 6 months - 4 years, and 5 -11 years provided protection against severe disease.

The vaccine was shown to be **~90%** effective against severe infection causing hospitalization.

What about side effects?

Side effects are similar to older children and adults. The most common was pain at the injection site followed by: fatigue, headache, chills, muscle pain.

Babies ages 6 months through 3 years old also might cry, feel sleepy or lose their appetite after vaccination. Similar to adults, children have side effects within 2 days after vaccination that typically last 1 to 3 days.

The benefits of COVID-19 vaccinations outweigh the risks of vaccination.

Dosage and Timing

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommended 8-week interval for children 6 months - 4 years, and 5 -11. The Recommendation is based on evidence from adults that longer gaps may improve immune response, reduce side-effects e.g. myocarditis

Reasons to vaccinate your child:

- To protect their health
- To prevent virus transmission
- To stay in school and continue with other in-person activities:
- To protect the broader community

A look at the numbers:

- In Alberta, 51.5% of kids 5-11 (total population 391,430) have been vaccinated with at least 1 dose, 37.5% with 2 doses
- 5.1% of 0-4y (total population 217,304) have been vaccinated with at least 1 dose

<https://www.alberta.ca/stats/covid-19-alberta-statistics.htm#vaccinations>

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID-19_vaccine/Vaccinesforchildren_under11.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2022-05-19/02-COVID-Link-Gelles-508.pdf>

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmoa2110475>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/covid-19-vaccines-for-kids/art-20513332#what-side-effects>

<https://immunizebc.ca/covid-19-vaccination-children-6-months-4-years-old>