

FIVE REASONS TO GET YOUR CHILD VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19

Ontario Public Health Association



For nearly two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted children's lives. Schools were closed and play dates and extracurricular activities were cancelled. Visits with extended family stopped. This has taken a toll on children's development, mental health and well-being.

On November 19, 2021, the Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) COVID-19 mRNA vaccine was approved in Canada for 5 - 11 year olds. Now is the time to get your 5 - 11 year old vaccinated to make sure our path to in-person school, social life with family and friends, and pursuing our passions continues.

WHERE TO GET THE VACCINE IN ONTARIO

You can make an appointment for your child through:

- Ontario's online booking system ([Ontario.ca/covid-19](https://ontario.ca/covid-19))
- Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine call centre (1-833-943-3900)
- Local public health units (web search: public health locator)
- Local pharmacies
- Primary care providers
- Specialty clinics in your area for children with medical complexity or sensory needs

Children and needles

If your child is anxious about getting a needle, you can ask for ways to help them feel better, such as a longer appointment time or a private space for the injection. The CARD system (comfort, ask, relax, distract) may help. More information can be found at AboutKidsHealth.ca/card. For children worried about pain, there are numbing creams and patches available at many pharmacies.



Why should my 5 –11 year old be vaccinated as soon as possible?

- 1 To protect your child from getting sick from COVID-19, being hospitalized or even dying.**
Vaccines protect children from getting sick with COVID-19 and lower their risk of serious illness, hospitalization, long-term COVID-19 symptoms, spreading COVID-19 to others and even death. COVID-19 is unpredictable. Some children who get the virus may have no symptoms or only mild symptoms, but children have been hospitalized and some have died. Unvaccinated people, including children, are much more likely to get COVID-19 than those who are vaccinated.
- 2 To protect your child from Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome and “long COVID”.**
Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C) is a serious side effect of COVID-19 in children. This is a rare, but serious condition that appears weeks after having COVID-19. It involves swelling in the body that affects a child’s lungs, heart, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes or gastrointestinal organs. Another rare, but serious condition that can occur after having COVID-19 is called “long COVID”. Symptoms include tiredness, headache, loss of smell and sore throat. Long COVID can occur even after a mild illness.
- 3 Slow transmission and help stop new variants.**
This pandemic has affected the development, mental health and well-being of children, youth and their families. The Hospital for Sick Children found more than 70% of children (2 - 18 years) had worse mental health during COVID-19 lockdowns. Getting children vaccinated as soon as possible allows them to get back to doing the things they enjoy, including spending time with grandparents, play dates with friends and extracurricular activities. These activities are known to boost physical and mental health.
- 4 To protect household members, especially those who are immunocompromised and those too young to be vaccinated.**
Anyone can get COVID-19 and pass it to others, even if they don’t have symptoms, but people who are vaccinated pass the virus to others at a much lower rate than unvaccinated people. This helps limit the spread of the virus within households. Getting vaccinated helps protect family members who are more likely to get sick from COVID-19 and infants and young children who are not able to be vaccinated right now.
- 5 The benefits of vaccination far outweigh the risks.**
The Pfizer vaccine works well in children 5 - 11 years to make the antibodies needed to fight the COVID-19 virus. In the Pfizer trials, children who got two doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine had a 90.7% lower chance of getting sick with COVID-19. No new side effects were seen in these trials. Side effects involving the heart (myocarditis and pericarditis) that have occurred in adolescents and adults are extremely rare (3 to 8 cases per million doses) and are usually mild and go away with rest and medication. Myocarditis is much more likely to happen from the COVID-19 virus than the vaccine.

COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN AGED 5- 11



Cases of COVID-19 in children under 12 are on the rise. The Delta variant is more than two times as contagious as previous variants and is more likely to cause severe illness, including hospitalization and ICU admissions in those infected. The Omicron variant is spreading even more quickly. COVID-19 vaccines are the best defence against COVID-19 and its variants.

This resource was created from a variety of credible sources including the:

- Canadian Paediatric Society's Position Statement COVID-19 vaccine for children 5 - 11 years of age (November 23, 2021)
- COVID-19 vaccines for children and youth from the Ontario Ministry of Health (November 24, 2021).

For a complete list of sources used, please contact the Ontario Public Health Association at admin@opha.on.ca.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Speak to your healthcare provider to help answer your questions about the COVID-19 vaccine for your child. You can also find helpful, reliable and credible information from these sources:

- Local public health unit (web search: public health locator)
- Local pharmacy
- Primary care provider
- Children's Healthcare Coalition website ([KidsHealthFirst.ca](https://www.kidshealthfirst.ca))
- SickKids COVID-19 vaccine consult service (1-888-304-6558). This is a by-appointment phone service that provides a safe, judgement-free space to have an open conversation about the COVID-19 vaccine with a paediatric registered nurse. It is available in multiple languages, using over-the-phone language interpretation.