

RNA COVID-19 Paediatric Vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna)

Vaccination,
the best protection

November 2022

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and its complications.

Disease	Signs and symptoms	Possible complications
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Cough• Trouble breathing• Loss of smell• Fatigue• Headaches• Muscle aches• Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea• Overall sick feeling	<p>While rare, the following are potential complications in children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent long COVID-19 complications lasting several months: trouble breathing, fatigue, weakness, difficulty falling/staying asleep, and concentrating• Pneumonia and other respiratory issues• Heart problems• Neurological problems such as brain inflammation, etc.• Inflammation temporally associated with COVID-19, leading to organ dysfunction (Paediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome [PIMS])

The vaccine

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and its complications. Pfizer and Moderna paediatric vaccines are approved for children aged 6 months to 11 years. For children aged 5 to 11 years, Pfizer paediatric vaccine is recommended.

Pfizer or Moderna paediatric vaccine requires 2 doses for the regular schedule, with the exception of Pfizer paediatric vaccine for children aged 6 months to 4 years, which requires 3 doses. Children on dialysis or with weakened immune systems should receive an additional dose of vaccine. One or more booster doses of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine may be recommended depending on the person's age or health condition, regardless of the vaccine previously received.

After 2 doses, efficacy for these vaccines was over 85% against infections caused by Alpha and Delta variants for children aged 5 to 11 years. Efficacy was more than 35% against infections caused by Omicron variant. Studies on the vaccine's efficacy in children are ongoing.

For healthy children who had COVID-19 before they receive their 1st dose of the vaccine, at least one dose is required followed by one or more booster doses if needed. For children who had COVID-19 when they were given the 1st dose or afterwards, at least 2 doses are required followed by one or more booster doses if needed. There is no risk in giving 2 or more doses of vaccine to a child who has had COVID-19. For children on dialysis or with weakened immune systems, a previous infection with COVID-19 is not taken into account.

Symptoms after vaccination

Some symptoms may be caused by the vaccine (e.g., pain at the injection site). Other problems may occur by chance and are not related to the vaccine (e.g., cold, gastroenteritis). Most reactions are generally harmless, are less frequent among children than among teenagers and adults, and do not last more than 1 or 2 days. They are more frequently experienced when the second dose is administered. Using an interval of 8 weeks or more between doses reduces the frequency of reactions after vaccination.

Pfizer paediatric and Moderna vaccines cannot cause COVID-19 because they do not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus that is responsible for the disease. However, children who have been in contact with the virus in the days preceding or following their vaccination could still develop COVID-19.

(see verso)

RNA COVID-19 Paediatric Vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) *(continued)*

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Safety of the vaccine

Pfizer paediatric and Moderna vaccines are approved by Health Canada. They have met all the requirements for approval. These vaccines were tested on many children. Experts are closely monitoring any adverse reactions that could occur following vaccination and taking measures to ensure the safety and effectiveness of these vaccines.

Frequency	Known reactions to this vaccine	What to do
In most cases (more than 1 child in 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain at the injection site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply a cold, damp compress at the injection site.• Use medication for fever or discomfort if needed.• See a doctor if symptoms are severe.
Very often (less than 1 child in 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redness or swelling at the injection site• Headache• Fatigue, irritability, drowsiness (sleepiness), loss of appetite• Muscle soreness	
Often (less than 1 child in 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diarrhea, vomiting• Joint pain• Swollen lymph nodes under the armpit	
Exceptionally (less than 1 child in 100 000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Myocarditis or pericarditis after vaccination*	

* The risk seems higher after the 2nd dose and in boys. For children aged 5 to 11 years, this risk may be lower with Pfizer paediatric vaccine. No cases have occurred in children aged 6 months to 5 years.

We recommend that you stay at the clinic at least 15 minutes after vaccination because allergic reaction may occur. If an allergic reaction occurs, the symptoms will appear a few minutes after vaccination. The person giving the vaccine will be able to treat this reaction immediately.

If you have any questions, ask the person administering the vaccine, call Info-Santé 811 or speak with your doctor.