How does the COVID-19 vaccine protect against COVID-19?

A complete series with the Pfizer vaccine (10 mcg) should be offered to children 5 to 11 years of age who do not have contraindications to the vaccine, with a dosing interval of at least 8 weeks between the first and second doses.

The vaccine causes our body to produce protection (such as antibodies) to help keep us from becoming sick if we are exposed to the COVID-19 virus. You cannot get a COVID-19 infection from the vaccine.

Pfizer vaccine uses messenger RNA (mRNA) which triggers a response to help our body protect itself against the virus. Vaccines like Pfizer offer a high level of protection against COVID-19.

It takes approximately 14 days after receiving the first dose of Pfizer vaccine to develop immunity to COVID-19. An interval of at least 8 weeks between first and second doses gives children the opportunity to develop better and longer-lasting immunity, which will be important in future waves of the pandemic, and further minimizes the very rare risk of myocarditis following vaccination. Two doses are required to be fully vaccinated.

While breakthrough cases of COVID-19 will occasionally occur in vaccinated populations, evidence shows that receiving the vaccine protects individuals against severe disease and death.

Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine at this time?

Every person in Nova Scotia aged 5 years and older who wants the COVID-19 vaccine will receive it for free.

Children under age 12 years will receive a lower dose of the Pfizer vaccine than was given to individuals 12 years and older. This was tested in clinical trials and children had a good immune response.

If your child turns 12 after they received their first dose of Pfizer vaccine, then they will receive the adolescent/adult form of the vaccine for their second dose.

Children 5 to 11 years of age who are moderately to severely immunocompromised who have previously received two doses of the Pfizer vaccine (10 mcg), may receive a third dose of the Pfizer vaccine (10 mcg) 4 to 8 weeks after the second dose. An additional dose provides another opportunity for children who are immunocompromised to develop a better immune response and in turn, better protection against COVID-19.

Tell your immunization provider if your child received any COVID-19 vaccines outside Nova Scotia or Canada.

When to cancel and rebook your vaccine appointment

Cancel and rebook your vaccine appointment using the link on your emailed vaccine appointment confirmation if you or your child are unwell or you or your child are required to isolate.

For information visit: novascotia.ca/vaccine-plan
Rare cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the lining around the heart) following vaccination with COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have been reported after receipt of the adolescent/adult COVID-19 vaccine formulation. These rare cases occur more commonly after the second dose, among males and among adolescents and young adults, and after Moderna compared with Pfizer. Canadian data suggests they occur less commonly with a longer interval between the first and second dose of vaccine.

Most of these cases, although hospitalized, are relatively mild and recover well with rest and treatment of symptoms.

Initial data suggest that the risk of myocarditis and pericarditis in 5-11 year olds following COVID-19 mRNA vaccination appears to be lower in this age group than in adolescents and adults.

Myocarditis and pericarditis can also occur as a complication in people infected with COVID-19 including very rarely in children.

**Symptoms can include:**
- shortness of breath
- chest pain or pressure
- unexplained sweating
- cough
- the feeling of a fast, pounding or fluttering heartbeat
- swelling in the ankles and feet

If your child has a history of myocarditis not related to mRNA COVID-19 vaccination you should consult their health care provider for individual considerations and recommendations.

If your child was previously diagnosed with myocarditis but is no longer being followed by a medical professional for heart issues, they should receive the vaccine.

**As a precautionary measure if your child was diagnosed with myocarditis and/or pericarditis following their first dose of Pfizer vaccine, you should delay the second dose in the vaccination series until more information is available.**

The benefits of receiving COVID-19 vaccine outweigh the very small risk of myocarditis/pericarditis in people of all ages.

Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, Nova Scotia, and vaccine manufacturers continue to closely monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines.

*Updated Feb. 9, 2022*

For information visit: novascotia.ca/vaccine-plan
# Who can get the Pfizer Pediatric COVID-19 vaccine?

If you identify with any of the situations in the ★ MAY BE ABLE TO GET ★ column, you should discuss your personal risks of COVID-19 and potential benefits and risks of getting the vaccine with your doctor, nurse practitioner, specialist, clinic nurse or pharmacist familiar with your medical history before deciding whether getting the vaccine is right for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELIGIBILITY</th>
<th>CAN GET</th>
<th>MAY BE ABLE TO GET</th>
<th>SHOULD NOT GET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> Pfizer Pediatric vaccine: 5–11 years of age</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your child received any COVID-19 vaccines while living in another province/country?</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>★</td>
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<tr>
<td>People who tested positive for COVID-19 and have not been fully vaccinated are advised to wait 2 months to get a first or second dose of vaccine. Some people may choose to receive a vaccine dose after symptoms of COVID-19 have resolved and they are no longer infectious.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has your child been diagnosed with Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) in the past? Need to provide date of diagnosis to health care provider. Your child can receive COVID-19 vaccine when they have recovered or it has been greater than 90 days since the onset of MIS-C, whichever is longer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has your child received treatment for COVID-19 with (Sotrovimab)? Need to provide date when received to health care provider. Each situation will be decided on a case-by-case basis to ensure you receive protection from the vaccine.</td>
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<td>Has your child suffered an anaphylactic reaction (severe allergic reaction) to a vaccine or another injectable medication? If you answer yes, your child may be vaccinated today, but will be observed for 30 minutes after receiving your vaccination. (Children with a diagnosed food allergy can receive the COVID-19 vaccine without this prolonged observation time.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did your child experience myocarditis or pericarditis after their first immunization with Pfizer vaccine?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allergies: Has your child ever experienced anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) to Polyethylene Glycol (PEG)*, Tromethamine (trometamol or Tris) or any other ingredient in the vaccine? Tell the health care provider if your child is allergic to anything that may contain Polyethylene Glycol, Tromethamine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allergies: * In very rare cases, Polyethylene glycol (PEG) can cause allergic reactions. It is found in products such as medications, bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrups, cosmetics, skin creams, dermal fillers, medical products used on the skin and during operations, and contact lens solutions. * Tromethamine is a component in contrast media, oral and parenteral medications. Consultation with an allergist is recommended before your child receives Pfizer vaccine. Nut allergies are not a contraindication to vaccination of children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problems with immune system: Does your child have problems with their immune system?</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problems with immune system: Does your child have an autoimmune disease?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has your child been vaccinated in the past 14 days (not a COVID-19 vaccine)? As a precaution, NACI recommends that COVID-19 vaccines should not routinely be given at the same time with other vaccines. There may be circumstances in which simultaneous administration, or a shortened interval may be warranted on an individual basis. A healthcare professional can help to determine timing of COVID-19 vaccines with non-COVID-19 vaccines.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Updated Feb. 9, 2022**

For information visit: novascotia.ca/vaccine-plan

In addition to the above information, tell the health care provider if:

- Your child has fainted or felt faint after getting past vaccines or medical procedures. Your health care provider may recommend that you get the vaccine lying down to prevent fainting.
- Your child has a bleeding disorder or is taking medication that could affect blood clotting. This information will help the health care provider prevent bleeding or bruising from the needle.
When should my child return for their second dose of vaccine?

It is very important for your child to get the second dose for the vaccines to work well.

Tell the person providing the second dose if your child experienced any side effects after the first dose.

Tips for Parents
Supporting Children to Receive Their COVID-19 Vaccine

Resources for Children Receiving Immunizations
- iwk.nshealth.ca/covid-assets/Nervous-About-Needles-En.pdf
- iwk.nshealth.ca/COVID-19/vaccination-resources

For information visit: novascotia.ca/vaccine-plan
Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine for Children Aged 5-11

Everything you need to know after your child gets the COVID-19 vaccine

What should I do right after getting the vaccine?

- You and your child will stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting the vaccine. You may be asked to wait for 30 minutes if there is concern about a possible vaccine allergy or allergy to another injectable medication.
- Tell a health care provider at the clinic if your child feels unwell while waiting. If waiting in your vehicle, honk your horn to get their attention.
- Be sure to leave your masks on if waiting inside the clinic.
- Use the hand sanitizer (alcohol based hand rub) to clean your hands before leaving the clinic.

In rare cases, people can faint or have an allergic reaction after getting a vaccine.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction include:

- hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy)
- swelling of your face, tongue or throat
- or difficulty breathing

Clinic staff are prepared to manage these events if they happen.

Tell a health care provider at the clinic right away if your child is having any of these symptoms.

Serious side effects after getting the vaccine are rare. However, should your child develop any serious symptoms that could be related to an allergic reaction, CALL 911 RIGHT AWAY.

For information visit: novascotia.ca/vaccine-plan
What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine? What can I expect over the next few days?

Children can have side effects in the two weeks after getting the vaccine with most of the common side effects occurring in the first day or two.

Side effects are expected and can show the vaccine is working to produce protection in your body. They may include:

- Pain, swelling or redness where the needle was given. Place a cool, damp cloth or wrapped ice pack over where the vaccine was given.
- Tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, nausea, vomiting, chills, fever or enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands) in your child’s underarm. Pain or fever medication (acetaminophen or ibuprofen) may relieve the pain or fever. Check with your healthcare provider if you need advice about medication.

Although these side effects are not serious, they may make your child feel unwell for about one to three days. They will go away on their own.

Rarely Bell’s palsy (weakened or inability to move the muscles of the face) has been reported after mRNA vaccines like Pfizer. Seek medical attention right away if your child experiences facial weakness or drooping or other symptoms involving the face.

If you have any concerns about the symptoms your child develops after getting the vaccine, including symptoms of myocarditis/pericarditis, contact your health care provider for advice. Tell the person providing the second dose about any side effects your child experienced with the first dose.

Things to remember

Even after you have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, you must continue to follow public health guidance to prevent spread of COVID-19. Continue to follow these measures until we know more about how well the vaccine prevents infection and reduces the risk of transmission.

- wear a mask indoors
- clean your hands regularly
- stay home if you or your child feel unwell

Your child should wait 14 days before receiving another vaccine. A healthcare professional can help to determine timing of COVID-19 vaccines with non-COVID-19 vaccines.

Do not have your child get a TB (tuberculosis) test until 4 weeks after their COVID-19 vaccine.

Keep this sheet or other immunization record in a safe place. If you have questions, call your health care provider or visit novascotia.ca/vaccine-plan.