



COVID-19 Vaccines for Children Aged 5-11

November 2021

Background

While the first COVID-19 vaccines were available to adults in the latter part of 2020 as part of a descending age-based rollout program and later became available to youths between the ages of 12 and 17 in May 2021,ⁱ children under the age of 12 have not been eligible for COVID-19 vaccines until Health Canada approved their use in youth on November 19, 2021. The Health Canada approved pediatric formulation of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has undergone rigorous testing and thorough review to ensure safety and efficacy.ⁱⁱ As a result, on November 29, the province will begin administering the pediatric version of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children between the ages of five to eleven.

The dose of the pediatric vaccine is 10 micrograms, one-third the amount of the dose offered for adults and older youths (30 micrograms). This dosage is based on research conducted by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) noting that two doses of 10 micrograms is sufficient for children of this age to achieve the same or similar level of protection against COVID-19 as older youths and adults.ⁱⁱⁱ It has also been determined the optimal interval between doses for children aged five to eleven is eight weeks.

Presently, out of approximately 350,000 children between the ages of five and eleven eligible to receive the vaccine in BC, more than 90,000 have been registered in the ['Get Vaccinated'](#) online system.^{iv} All children must be registered in this system to obtain a booking link to get vaccinated. Those who are currently four years old will be required to wait until their fifth birthday to receive the vaccine, and children who receive the pediatric vaccine for their first dose and turn twelve before their second will receive the standard 30-microgram dose as their second dose.^v

Parents and guardians can register their children anytime and are recommended to do so in order to receive their booking link. As of November 25, all children who are registered will begin receiving information about how to book. There will be no specific age-based vaccine rollout order for children. All children between five and eleven will become eligible to receive their vaccine at the same time to provide greater ease for parents and guardians who may wish to bring all of their children to get vaccinated at once. A parent or guardian must either be present with the child at the time of vaccination to provide verbal consent, or send written consent

Some clinics will also be able to offer booster doses to parents and guardians at the same appointment time, provided that they are eligible to do receive one and are in a clinic that is supplied with both adult and pediatric vaccines. Clinics administering pediatric vaccines will offer a child-friendly environment to ensure that children feel as comfortable as possible throughout the process. When parents go to book the vaccine appointment online through the 'Get Vaccinated' system, there will be a choice of three different types of clinics, clearly identified:^{vi}

- Family Clinics: open to children aged 5-11 as well as their families, parents and/or guardians
- 12+ Clinics: open only to those aged 12 and up
- All-Ages Clinics: open to everyone aged 5 and up

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on children of this age who have missed school and many social activities for nearly two years. While children are at lower risk of contracting severe illness from COVID-19, there have been some rare pediatric cases which resulted in hospitalization, long-term effects, and in a small number of cases, death.^{vii} Ensuring children are vaccinated also helps to reduce transmission rates for family members who may have a weaker immune response or other underlying conditions.

Nurses understand the importance of becoming vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible and have led the immunization process. Nurses know that the COVID-19 vaccines, and in fact all vaccines, are rigorously tested prior to use. To date, more than 90% of British Columbians aged 12 and over have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.^{viii} By making it possible for all British Columbians for all age groups



to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, we ensure that our communities are better protected against COVID-19. As leaders in immunization, nurses play a critical role in communicating not only the importance of children receiving this vaccine but in ensuring that children and their parents/guardians are well supported during the vaccination process.

Key Messages

- Starting Monday, November 29, 2021, children between the ages of five and eleven will be eligible to receive the pediatric formulation of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.
- Health Canada approved the use of Pfizer-BioNTech's pediatric COVID-19 vaccine on November 19, 2021.
- The pediatric vaccine is provided in a smaller dose of 10 micrograms, one-third the amount of the dose administered to older youths and adults.
- All children must be registered in the 'Get Vaccinated' system in order to receive a booking link to visit a vaccination clinic and a parent or guardian must be present at the time of vaccination to provide consent.
- There are three types of vaccination clinics: family clinics for children 5 to 11 and their families, 12+ clinics for individuals aged 12 and up, and all-ages clinics for all individuals aged 5 and up.
- It is important to get children vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible to help prevent serious illness and hospitalization from COVID-19, and to prevent transmission to others.
- As trusted health professionals, nurses play a critical role in communicating the importance of becoming vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Nurses understand the importance of providing a safe and patient-centred environment for people of all ages to receive their vaccination.

Further Reading/Resources

- [BC Government: COVID-19 Vaccines for Children 5-11](#)
- [COVID-19 Update: Immunization of Children 5-11](#)
- [BCCDC: Children and COVID-19 Vaccination \(Ages 5-17\)](#)
- [ImmunizeBC: COVID-19 Vaccines FAQ for Children Aged 5-11](#)
- [Doctors of BC: Kids 5-11 and the COVID-19 Vaccine Factsheet](#)
- [Health Canada Authorizes Use of Comirnaty \(Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine\) for Children 5-11](#)

ⁱ Gov BC, Office of the Premier. 'B.C. youth 12+ can register, get vaccinated against COVID-19.' *Government of BC*. May 20, 2021. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021PREM0037-000986>

ⁱⁱ Gov BC News. 'Safe, effective COVID-19 pediatric vaccine available for children aged 5-11.' *Government of BC*. Nov 23, 2021. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021HLTH0209-002245>;

Health Canada. 'Health Canada authorizes use of Comirnaty (the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine) in children 5 to 11 years of age.' Nov 19, 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2021/11/health-canada-authorizes-use-of-comirnaty-the-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-in-children-5-to-11-years-of-age.html>



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- iii BC Gov News. 'Joint statement on Health Canada approval of COVID-19 pediatric vaccine.' Government of BC. Nov 19, 2021. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021HLTH0204-002205>
- iv Gov BC News. '*Safe, effective COVID-19 pediatric vaccine available for children aged 5-11.*' Nov 23, 2021.
- v BCCDC. 'Children and COVID-19 Vaccination.' 2021. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/vaccines-children#Ages--5--to--11>
- vi Gov BC. 'COVID-19 vaccines for children 5 to 11.' Nov 23, 2021. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/children>
- vii Gov BC News. '*Safe, effective COVID-19 pediatric vaccine available for children aged 5-11.*' Nov 23, 2021;
- Gov BC. 'COVID-19 Immunization of Children 5 to 11.' PowerPoint. Nov 23, 2021. https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Immunization_of_Children.pdf
- viii Gov BC News. '*Safe, effective COVID-19 pediatric vaccine available for children aged 5-11.*' Nov 23, 2021.