

# Paediatric COVID-19 Vaccine: 6 Months to Under 5 years

FAQ for Parents/Guardians as of August 2, 2022

## Are children under five years old at risk from COVID-19 infection?

- Yes, children under five years old are at risk from COVID-19 infection
- Even though children don't tend to get as sick as adults (especially older adults) very young children from newborns to four years old are at higher risk of severity compared to slightly older or school aged children
- More children are being hospitalized with COVID-19 during Omicron than during previous waves
- We know that some children can develop a rare multi-inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) or even long-COVID, but we can't predict who will get sickest

## Why vaccinate young children?

- COVID-19 variants are continuing to cause illness. We are currently in a 7<sup>th</sup> wave caused by the BA.5 variant of Omicron
- COVID-19 transmission is expected to increase again this fall and may even be worse as people move indoors with the colder weather
- Flu (or influenza) season is also expected to cause illness, so we want to protect children from COVID-19 and avoid severe infections with multiple viruses together (such as influenza and COVID-19)
- While children may not become severely ill, they can pass it on to family members or other vulnerable people who may become severely ill, or be forced to miss work
- Vaccination allows us to protect our families as other restrictions (mandatory masking, school closures, travel rules) are lifted

## Does the vaccine work?

- Yes! mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing your child/others from getting COVID-19 (including when Omicron is the main variant)
- Moderna's paediatric COVID-19 vaccine is about 51% effective in preventing COVID-19 infection in children aged six months to two years old and 37% effective in children aged two to five years old
- We expect that this vaccine will be even better at preventing **severe illness or hospitalization**

## Which vaccine is better?

- Only the paediatric Moderna vaccine has been approved by Health Canada for use in children ages six months to under five years at this time
- Pfizer's paediatric COVID-19 vaccine for this age group has not yet been approved by Health Canada and we don't know when it will be. It will be a three-dose vaccine, as opposed to the two dose Moderna vaccine



### How was the vaccine studied?

- Moderna's paediatric vaccine was given to 4,000 children in the research study and none of them developed severe illness
- None of the patients in this study had serious side effects
- There were no cases of myocarditis or pericarditis in the clinical trials for youngest age group

### What about side effects after the vaccine?

- The most common side effects include:
  - Irritability/crying
  - Pain at the injection site
  - Tiredness/fatigue
  - Low appetite
  - Fever
  - Headache and muscle pain

### How do we know this vaccine won't cause long-term health problems?

- mRNA vaccines have been studied for many years in other diseases and we know the technology is safe
- This vaccine has been used in the United States since June 2022 and we continuously monitor for concerns
- There have been over 12 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines given around the world with no long-term side effects reported

### Why does my child need to be vaccinated if they have had COVID-19 infection?

- Vaccination after COVID-19 infection is important for the development of longer-lasting and more robust immunity.
- Vaccination is the strongest protection from re-infection
- Hybrid immunity happens when you have a COVID-19 infection and then you get vaccinated. Hybrid immunity is stronger and longer lasting than immunity from having been infected!
- Please wait eight weeks after infection to get vaccinated, this will allow the vaccine to provide the strongest protection

### Other questions?

Visit the COVID19 Vaccine Consult Service to book a phone appointment with a SickKids Registered Nurse: [sickkids.ca/vaccineconsult](https://sickkids.ca/vaccineconsult)

Visit [york.ca/COVID19Vaccine](https://york.ca/COVID19Vaccine) regularly for updated information.