

## Talking to your child about the COVID-19 vaccine:

Children ages 5-11 are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine!

With COVID-19 measures loosening, many residents are engaging in normal activities again. These activities often involve an increase in close contacts and an increase in the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

***The COVID-19 vaccine is the best way for children and families to protect themselves against illness from COVID-19.***

## How to talk to your child about the COVID-19 vaccine:

### 1) Talk to them about the vaccine

#### **What is the COVID-19 vaccine and how does it work?**

The COVID-19 vaccine is the most effective tool for protecting yourself against the COVID-19 virus. The vaccine works by exposing your body to a piece of the COVID-19 virus (not a live virus). When your body notices something is off, it will remove the piece of the virus and remember it for later. At a later date, if you come into contact with the real COVID-19 virus, your body will be prepared to fight it off quickly.

#### **Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Vaccination is an important tool to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and allow children and families to safely resume normal activities and support mental health and wellbeing. When enough people are protected from COVID-19, the risk to those who cannot get immunized is much lower. Vaccines, along with mask-wearing, physical distancing and other precautions, will help protect the health of the broader community.

#### **What vaccine will my child get?**

The COVID-19 vaccine available to children age 5-11 is the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. This vaccine is similar to the Pfizer vaccine available to people over the age of 12 but is a third (1/3) of the size of the adult dose. Smaller dose for the smaller humans! Children ages 5-11 will need to get 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to be fully vaccinated, just like adults. The soonest the second dose can be received is 8 weeks after the first dose.

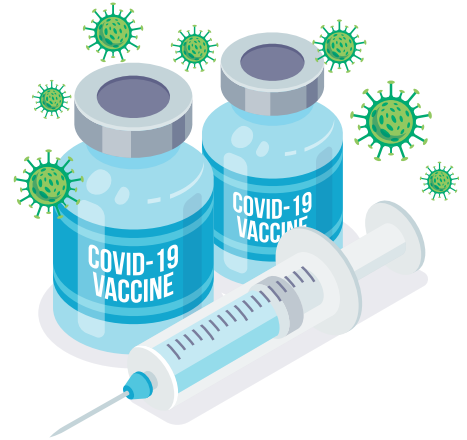
#### **Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?**

You can **not** get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

#### **Can the vaccine stop me from getting sick with COVID-19?**

It can! The COVID-19 vaccine can protect residents from getting sick with COVID-19 and better protected against severe illness from COVID-19. This means that there is a very small chance of getting sick at all from the virus and an even smaller chance of getting very sick from the virus after getting your second dose.

#### **Does the COVID-19 vaccine have side effects?**



Mild side effects from the vaccine are normal. These typically last 1-3 days. They can include:

- redness, soreness or swelling on the arm where you got the injection
- tiredness, headache
- muscle and joint pain
- chills, mild fever

These side effects are a normal sign of the immune response and tell us that our body is doing its job to identify, remove, and remember the components of the vaccine.

Side effects beyond the ones listed above are very rare. But if experienced, residents should seek medical attention. Learn more about the [vaccine side effects](#).

### **Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?**

Yes! Health Canada approved the vaccine for use in specific age groups. Right now, the paediatric vaccine has been approved for residents turning 5-11 years of age in 2021. The only people who may experience issues with getting the vaccine are people with allergies to an ingredient in the vaccine. This is very rare.

### **What is in the vaccine?**

The vaccine contains fats, salts, sugars, and buffers. If your child has severe allergies to food, drugs, or environmental allergens, please review the [ingredient list](#) and speak to your health care provider if you have any concerns. The vaccine **does not** contain eggs, gelatin, gluten, latex, preservatives, antibiotics, adjuvants, or aluminum.

Speak to your health care provider or a [paediatric registered nurse](#) to learn more about your child's health and the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **2) Listen to your child**

Allow them to ask questions and share any concerns they may have. Children may be discussing the vaccine with their friends or other adults in their life. It is okay to not have all the answers. Use [Peterborough Public Health](#) as a source for information or a healthcare provider.

### **3) Prepare for needle anxiety**

Needles can be scary. Children should be ready for a little pinch but it will last no more than 3 seconds! If your child has needle anxiety, try these tips to help your child prepare for their vaccine appointment:

1. Get comfortable
  - a. Make sure they are comfortable with the COVID-19 vaccine and the choice to receive the vaccine
  - b. Let them choose their vaccine outfit. Make it fun, make it comfy! A short sleeved t-shirt should be worn under a shirt or sweater to make it easy to access the shoulder muscle where they will receive the vaccine
  - c. Bring a special toy or blanket as comfort
2. Use a topical anesthetic
  - a. Topical anesthetics are safe and effective ways to reduce pain during immunization in children. Products such as Emla are available for purchase at most local pharmacies without a prescription. These products

need to be applied correctly before your child arrives to the clinic. Talk to your pharmacist and follow the product's directions to ensure it is applied at the correct time and location on the body.

3. Ask Questions
  - a. Let your child ask you questions, a medical professional, or another credible source
  - b. Let your child bring their questions to the vaccinator at the appointment
4. Relax!
  - a. Having a relaxed arm will actually reduce any pain your child may feel from the needle
  - b. Use a breathing exercise or tell a joke to help them relax at their appointment
5. Distract
  - a. Try to distract your child from looking at the needle
  - b. Bring a book for them to read, a game to play, or ask your vaccinator to tell a story

## Getting your COVID-19 Vaccine:

### Booking a COVID-19 vaccine appointment for your child

Booking a COVID-19 vaccine appointment is **COMING SOON** through the provincial vaccine booking system. This can be reached by two methods,

- 1) Book online at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>
- 2) Book over the phone using the provincial booking call centre at 1-833-943-3900

For a schedule of upcoming vaccine clinics in Peterborough region, please visit [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/clinics](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/clinics)

## Additional Resources

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgBwVSYqfps>

