

Information about Youth Vaccination

Is the vaccine safe for youth?

- After passing clinical trials, Pfizer-Biotech has been authorized by Health Canada for people as young as 12 years old. A clinical study in over 2000 adolescents has shown that this vaccine prevents COVID-19 infection, including severe complications and death in children aged 12 to 15. Youth must be 12 years or older (includes youth born in 2009 turning 12) at the time of vaccination.
- Health Canada approved its safety and effectiveness for this age group. Refer to [Health Canada's statement](#) for more information on the approval.

Why should youth get vaccinated?

- Getting vaccinated helps protect children from getting sick and controls the spread of COVID-19 in the community.
- While COVID-19 in youth is usually milder than in adults, some youth can become very sick and have complications or long-lasting symptoms that affect their health and well-being. Like adults, youth can transmit COVID-19 to others if they're infected, even when no symptoms are present. The COVID-19 vaccine protects against this potential harm to youth and to others, including family members and friends who may be more likely to get very sick or die from COVID-19.
- Vaccination will help accelerate our return to "normal" which is important for our physical and mental health. Vaccinating will not only protect youth from the virus, but it will also help them look forward to a safer return to activities such as sports, art and other in-person activities.

Will youth experience side effects?

- The Pfizer vaccine is administered and works the same way as in adults. The side effects experienced by youth are similar to those experienced by adults.
- The most common side effects include pain and swelling at the site where the needle was given, tiredness, mild headache, dizziness, muscle pain, chills, joint pain and low fever. Most side effects are mild and resolved within 1-2 days after vaccination

How can youth make informed decisions about vaccination?

- Parents are encouraged to talk to their child about the risks and benefits of getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Let them know they will be receiving the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine. For more information about the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine, refer to [Health Canada](#).
- Make sure you're getting information about COVID-19 and the vaccine from reliable sources, such as your primary care provider, Peel Public Health, Public Health Ontario, and Health Canada. If you hear a rumor from a friend or family member, be sure to check the facts from these sources.

What should families know about informed consent?

- Individuals aged 12 years or older (includes youth born in 2009 turning 12) can consent to immunization on their own provided they have the capacity to make this decision. This means that they understand: what vaccination involves, why it is being recommended and the risks and benefits of accepting or refusing to be vaccinated.
- As with any other medical procedure, family discussion is pertinent, and we encourage parents and children to have conversations about COVID-19 vaccination.
- If a child is not capable of consenting to receiving the vaccine, they will require verbal or written consent from a substitute decision maker, such as their parent or legal guardian. This is consistent with legal allowances in the *Health Care Consent Act*. Parents or guardians can accompany their child to their vaccine appointment.

How long should youth wait to receive their second dose?

- Youth have a shortened dose interval so that they may begin the academic school year in September fully vaccinated. Youth should receive their second dose eight weeks after they receive their first.

What can youth do after vaccination?

- Youth must continue to protect themselves and others after being vaccinated. After receiving either dose of the vaccine, it is important that they continue to follow public health measures such as wearing a mask, practicing physical distancing and washing their hands.

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