

Just the facts for parents and youth on the COVID-19 vaccine

Information on the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

How safe is the COVID-19 vaccine?

[Health Canada](#) has approved the use of certain vaccines to help fight COVID-19. After a thorough and independent review, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was found to be safe and effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 in youth between the ages of 12 to 17 years. It is currently the only vaccine approved for this age group.

How effective is the vaccine among youth?

The vaccine is very effective against COVID-19 among youth. Even one dose offers excellent protection. A second dose is still required to complete the protection. The second dose is important as it will offer the best protection possible against COVID-19 and variants.

Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No, the vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19 as it does not contain the COVID-19 virus.

How does the vaccine work?

The vaccine will train your body to recognize the virus that causes COVID-19. Your body will then be better able to fight the virus in the future if you are exposed to it.

How will the vaccine help me?

The vaccine will prevent you from getting sick from COVID-19, or if you do get infected, you will have milder symptoms.

Are there any side effects?

[Side effects](#) are mostly mild to moderate and usually go away on their own. Common side effects include pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle or joint pain, chills, fever and diarrhea. Less common side effects include redness or swelling at the injection site, nausea and vomiting. No serious safety concerns were observed with study participants in this age group (ages 12-15).

Why is it important to prevent COVID-19?

- For some people who get infected, symptoms of COVID-19 can last for months (leaving long term effects). Studies are currently underway to examine possible long-term effects of having COVID-19 in adolescence.
- The virus can damage the heart, brain, lungs and increase the risk of long-term health problems.
- Even people who are young and healthy can feel unwell for weeks to months after the COVID-19 infection.
- COVID-19 can be a serious illness and even cause death, although this is rare in adolescents.
- There is a greater risk of serious illness among younger people with the virus variants (mutations).

Why is it important for youth to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The benefits that the vaccine provides, far outweigh any possible risks. Youth can still get infected and spread the virus to others, even if they don't show symptoms. Although serious illness among youth is less common than among adults, some can get severely sick with COVID-19 and may require hospitalization or intensive care and in rare cases, die. Also, the variants appear to be affecting younger people more seriously.

Why should I keep following public health measures after the vaccine?

Everyone will need to practise public health measures until most people get immunized. This is because even with the vaccine, you may still be able to spread the virus to others.

Where can I get more information?

Visit our website at phsd.ca for more on the COVID-19 vaccine. Or call us at 705.522.9200 (toll-free 1.866.522.9200). You can also ask your health care provider.