

# Max Facts For Caregivers

Learn about the COVID-19 Vaccine for 5 to 11 year olds

# MAX THE VAX

*Hi! I'm Max the Vax. I'm here to help young people feel safe and protected from COVID-19.*

*Parents and caregivers have an important role to support conversations about vaccines with the children they care for. That's why I'm answering some common questions about the vaccines, so you feel prepared to talk to the young people in your life about COVID-19, the vaccine, and what's right for them. Thank you for being a trusted person during such an important time in history.*

*Still have questions? Always check with your health care provider if you're unsure.*



## **Do I have to worry about any long-term effects of the vaccine?**

Doctors and scientists are confident in the long-term safety of the COVID-19 vaccines for several reasons.

First, this is not new vaccine technology. Scientists have been studying and working with mRNA vaccines for decades, including for flu, Zika, rabies, cytomegalovirus (CMV), and cancer treatments. Decades of studying mRNA have shown no long-term side effects.

Second, negative effects generally occur within six weeks of receiving the vaccine, and regulators in many countries required at least eight weeks of safety data. The vaccines have now been in use for many months with billions of doses administered around the world.

Third, we are very confident in the track record of Canada's vaccine approval and safety monitoring system. This means that the end data and safety tests for COVID-19 vaccines are the same as other vaccines that have been approved in Canada over the last several decades. Canada's system has proven time and again that the data necessary to get through the approval process is sufficient to prove safety, even for the long-term.

When considering long-term risks, a COVID-19 infection is a much more serious concern. The virus can cause long-term damage to lungs and other organs, as well as many other complications. This is called post-COVID-19 syndrome, or long COVID, and it's one of the reasons why doctors recommend getting vaccinated.



### **I'm worried. Will the vaccine change my child's genetics or cause infertility?**

No. The vaccine does not alter genetics or hormones. The active ingredient in the vaccine is called mRNA. It gets broken down very quickly after it is injected and cannot access your child's genetics. The COVID-19 vaccines do not affect puberty, the ability to have children, or your child's hormones as it is not involved in these body systems.

### **What about myocarditis? Pericarditis? I read this was a concern with young adults.**

In rare cases, some teens have experienced inflammation of the heart following immunization with a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. Typically, this condition has been mild, and people respond well to treatment and make a full recovery. Symptoms of heart inflammation can include:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling of a rapid or abnormal heart rhythm

If your child experiences these symptoms, seek medical attention and inform the health care provider that your child recently received a COVID-19 vaccine.

Scientists will be watching closely to see if there are concerns about myocarditis or pericarditis for the 5-11 age group. In the Pfizer trial for this age group, no cases of myocarditis/pericarditis were observed up to three months after second vaccine doses.

Because the dose for this age group is lower and kids this young have a lower risk overall of getting myocarditis/pericarditis, pediatric infectious diseases experts predict post-vaccine myocarditis rates in the 5-11-year age group will be lower than in the young adult population. This is good news!

### **The child I'm looking after has medical issues. Is it safe for them to be vaccinated?**

Yes. Children with other medical conditions such as Autism; ADHD; heart, lung, or kidney problems; or any other condition can safely receive the COVID-19 vaccine. In fact, kids with other medical issues may be at higher risk of complications from COVID-19, so it can be especially important to ensure they are vaccinated.



### **My child has allergies. Can they still get the vaccine?**

Yes! Children with allergies can receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Children with severe allergies to food, medications, and insect bites should all be vaccinated. If your child has had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine or medical product, or if you have other questions about allergic reactions, speak to your health care provider before getting the shot.

### **The child I am looking after is on medication. Can they still get the vaccine?**

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine does not interfere with other medications. Talk to your health care provider if you have more questions.

### **How far apart will the vaccines be for children 5-11?**

The initial recommendation is that first and second doses are spaced 8 weeks apart. This might change in the future as we learn from the real-world evidence gathered as more and more children are immunized.

### **Will children need boosters?**

This one is hard to answer. Approval has been submitted for a two-shot series for kids and, like adults, the third/booster situation will be decided in the months to come based on what COVID-19 decides to do next. Stay tuned!

### **Our family doesn't have an ID or an OHIP card. How can we get vaccinated?**

Everyone in Ontario can get the COVID-19 vaccine for free! If you don't have ID or an OHIP card, try checking in with the place you plan to get the vaccine ahead of time. If you can't do that, let them know on the day and they will help you navigate through.

### **Where can I go for more info?**

There is lots of really good information out there.  
Take a picture of this QR code to be taken to some of them!

