



COVID-19 vaccinations

A guide for parents of children 6 months to 11 years of age at high risk



Who is at higher risk from COVID-19 infection?

Children whose immune systems don't work as well (immunosuppression) are at serious risk from the complications of COVID-19 infection.

Eligible children and young people who are aged 6 months to 11 years should have the COVID-19 vaccinations. Your child's paediatrician will know if they need to have the vaccine.

What is COVID-19 or coronavirus?

COVID-19 is a very infectious respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Most children who get COVID-19 infection have no symptoms. Those that do usually, have mild symptoms like a bad cold.

A few children and young people will become very poorly and may have to go to hospital.

About the vaccine

Infants and children will be offered the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Younger children will be offered an infant dose (one tenth of the adult dose) whereas those over 5 years are offered one third of the adult dose.

For children aged 6 months to 4 years the initial course is 2 doses, at least 8 weeks apart. Most children aged 5 to 11 years of age initially need one dose of vaccine but if they have a severely weakened immune system they may be offered a second dose, usually at least 8 weeks later. Your child may also need a booster during seasonal campaigns.

Knowing if your child should have a vaccine

Your paediatrician should advise you about the COVID-19 vaccinations for your child. Some parents or carers may receive a letter or a phone call to invite their child to a HSC Trust clinic for vaccination.

Does the vaccine protect children against COVID-19?

The vaccine doesn't completely stop everyone from getting COVID-19 infection, but if they do, it should still stop them from becoming very poorly.

Common side effects

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. These include:

- their arm feeling heavy or sore where they had the injection
- feeling achy or like they have the flu
- feeling tired
- having a headache

Most of these are mild and short term and not everyone gets them. These common side effects should only last a day or two.

If they feel feverish (like they are very hot or very cold) they should:

- rest
- take paracetamol (please check that the dose and type of paracetamol is correct for their age)
- you can find more information on paracetamol here www.nhs.uk/medicines/paracetamol-for-children

They should feel better in less than a week.

The Pfizer vaccine tends to cause more of these common side effects after the second dose than the first dose.

Rare but serious side effects

Worldwide, there have been rare cases of inflammation of the heart reported after the adult dose of COVID-19 vaccines. This seems to be extremely rare after the children's dose.

These cases have been seen within a few days of vaccination. Most people felt better after a few days of simple treatment.

You should seek medical advice urgently from your doctor or Emergency Department if your child experiences:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering or pounding heart

If you are worried about your child, contact your GP practice or out of hours service. Make sure you tell them about the vaccine.

If you think they have had a serious side effect from the vaccine you can report it using the Coronavirus Yellow Card scheme. See back page.

How to book your appointment

If you receive an invitation letter, it will explain how to make the appointment for your child. Vaccinations are being offered at HSC Trust clinics throughout Northern Ireland.

What to do next

Your child's paediatrician will tell you if your child needs a second dose. If they do, this is usually about 8 weeks after their first dose.

How long does the vaccine take to work?

It can take a few weeks for the vaccine to protect your child.

What to do if your child is not well when it is their next appointment

If your child has, or you think they have, COVID-19, wait until they're feeling better before having the vaccine.

You should also wait if they have a high temperature or feel very unwell with any illness.

If your child has recently recovered from COVID-19, there is no need to wait to get the vaccine.



After the vaccine

You and your child can still reduce the chance of catching COVID-19 infections by:

- washing your hands and your child's hands carefully and often
- following the current guidance www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory infections.

If your child has a high temperature or feels unwell they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can, until they feel better or no longer have a high temperature (if they had one).

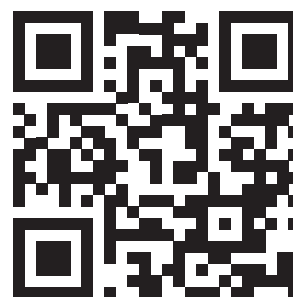
See <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/conditions/respiratory-infections-including-covid-19>

Further information

The Yellow Card scheme is a website where you can report any side effects from the vaccine. You can also call 0800 731 6789.

You can report suspected side effects on the website using the QR code below or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

You can also read the product information leaflet for more details on your vaccine, including possible side effects, on the Yellow Card website.



www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard

CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.



BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.



KILL IT

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.



Vaccination, helping to protect those most vulnerable

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