Newfoundland and Labrador
COVID-19 Immunization Plan
Children 5 to 11 Years of Age

November 23, 2021

NLife WITH COVID-19

Newfoundland Labrador

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the health and well-being of children. While children and adolescents are less likely to develop severe COVID-19 compared to older adults, severe illness and complications can and do occur in this population. COVID-19 infections or exposures have other negative impacts, such as school absences and social isolation.

A pediatric COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty has been approved by Health Canada.

The goal of Newfoundland and Labrador's COVID-19 Immunization Plan for children 5 to 11 years of age is to reduce severe illness and death due to COVID-19 by immunizing as many children in this age group as quickly as possible. Vaccination is a means to ensure children can continue their routines of daily life and not miss out on important things such as attending school. This province has successfully vaccinated individuals 12 years of age and older. Immunizing children ages 5 to 11 years is the next step in curtailing the spread of COVID-19 disease throughout our communities.

Note: This plan is subject to change with emerging evidence, changes in virus transmission, vaccine availability, and other factors. Any changes to this plan will be communicated accordingly.

Why vaccinate my child?

Although younger people who get COVID-19 usually have milder symptoms, some children will have more severe disease and may be hospitalized. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine will protect children from COVID-19 infection. Being vaccinated also helps prevent the virus from spreading to family and friends, and to people more likely to get very sick from COVID-19. High rates of vaccination coverage are key to:

- controlling the spread of the virus

- protecting people from severe illness

- helping everyone return to normal activities

Review and Approval Process for Vaccines

Any vaccines used in Canada must be approved by Health Canada through its rigorous regulatory process. The same review process is applied to all vaccines. COVID-19 vaccines will only be used in Newfoundland and Labrador if they are approved by Health Canada, and the evidence shows that they are safe, effective, of good quality, and beneficial.

Watch a video on how vaccines are developed in Canada

Approved Health Canada vaccines are safe. Even after approval, the vaccines continue to be monitored for safety and effectiveness. Pharmaceutical companies, health care providers and Health Canada are involved in this monitoring process. Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada will take action if there are any problems with a vaccine. Vaccines are monitored this way for as long as they are in use.

Vaccine Effectiveness

The Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty vaccine was found to be 90.7 per cent effective in preventing COVID-19 in children 5 to 11 years of age.

Dosing and Schedule

The Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine for children 5 to 11 years of age consists of two doses. The recommended interval between doses is eight weeks. It is very important to get both doses of COVID-19 vaccine. One dose of the vaccine provides you some protection that lasts for a few weeks, and the second dose provides stronger and longer lasting protection. At this time, there are no recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI) regarding booster doses for children 5 to 11 years of age.

Timeline for Vaccine Delivery

It is expected that vaccine will start arriving in the province by November 26, 2021. The immunization campaign for children will commence within days of vaccine delivery.

Vaccination Clinics

Vaccines will be available in a variety of settings as the COVID-19 Immunization Plan progresses. The goal is to provide multiple options so that anyone who wants to get vaccinated, can get vaccinated.

We anticipate the initial vaccine supply to be enough to provide a first dose to all eligible children with additional vaccine arriving in the weeks and months to follow. The first few weeks of the campaign will be led by Regional Health Authorities in mass vaccination clinics and schools throughout the province. This will allow parents flexible options to have their children vaccinated.

As the campaign progresses and supply increases, it will be possible to move vaccine more readily and provide targeted vaccine campaigns through school vaccination clinics, mobile clinics, and through participating health care professionals such as physicians and pharmacists.

Booking an Appointment

People who are eligible for vaccination can book an appointment online or by phone. To find out who is eligible now and how to book, please visit www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/gettheshot

Lifting Public Health Measures

Current COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be effective at reducing severe COVID-19 disease. We are still learning how the vaccine affects virus spread and how this will impact the population. Until more evidence is available, people must continue to comply with the Special Measures Orders that are in place, and follow the Public Health Guidance for All Alert Levels, even after vaccination.

Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 vaccines were developed so quickly. How do I know they are safe?

All new vaccines have to go through a very specific and scientifically strict process of testing and review to make sure they are safe and effective. The COVID-19 vaccines went through the very same processes. If you are considering getting a COVID-19 vaccine, here are five things you need to know:

Vaccines greatly reduce the chance of getting and spreading COVID-19

Each vaccine goes through a rigorous testing and approval process

The ingredients have been researched for over two decades

Vaccines teach your body how to launch its own immune response

Side effects are completely normal after receiving a vaccine

What is an mRNA vaccine and how do they work?

A COVID-19 mRNA vaccine teaches our cells how to make a piece of a protein that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. If the virus that causes COVID-19 later enters the body, the immune system will recognize the virus and remember how to fight it. The antibodies that our bodies produce protect us from future infections. The mRNA does not get into our genetic material or DNA.

Vaccination is the best way to protect your child from COVID-19. Learn how mRNA vaccines work like invisible coaches to teach your child's immune system to recognize the virus.

COVID-19 and kids: How mRNA vaccines work - YouTube

What are the expected side effects of COVID-19 vaccine?

As with other vaccines, there may be side effects. It is normal and expected to have common reactions after you receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Most of these side effects are mild and not everyone who is immunized will experience them. Even if you get side effects after the first dose, you still need to get the second dose for best protection. The most common side effects include:

- Soreness, tenderness or redness around the spot where the vaccine was given

- Feeling tired

- Headache

- Fever

- General muscle aches or mild flu-like symptoms

Can my child get COVID-19 from the COVID-19 shot?

No. You can't get COVID-19 infection from the vaccine.

How can I prepare my child for the COVID-19 vaccine appointment, especially if they are afraid of needles?

Helping Your Child with Vaccine Fear & Anxiety with Dr. Christine Chambers

www.pandemic-parent.org/podcast/helping-your-child-with-vaccine-fear-anxiety?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=quotes&utm_content=13+vaccine+fear+anxiety

Needles Don't Hurt – supported by Immunize Canada

https://immunize.ca/sites/default/files/resources/parentscanada-ad-feature-needles-dont-have-to-hurt.pdf

Is there any difference in the dosing of the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccines for younger children, older children or adults?

The Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine for children 5 to 11 years of age is a different formulation than the vaccine used for individuals 12 years of age and older. The dose for individuals 12 years of age and older is 30mcg (0.3mLs); the vaccination dose for children 5 to 11 years of age 10mcg (0.2mLs).

I've heard that the COVID-19 vaccine can affect the heart and cause myocarditis. What is myocarditis?

Recently, very rare cases of myocarditis (heart inflammation) have been reported after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Most cases have been mild and individuals have recovered. Most were young men and myocarditis occurred after the second dose of vaccine. This situation, as well as all potential adverse effects of vaccination, are closely and continuously monitored in Canada and in many other countries. The benefit of COVID-19 vaccination still outweighs the very rare risk of myocarditis. Parents should seek medical attention if their child develops sudden chest pains, shortness of breath, or palpitations. These symptoms typically occur within a week after the receipt of the vaccine dose. Prevention of COVID-19 is important, as children and youth who get sick with COVID-19 may have serious disease, including myocarditis and other heart problems.

My child had a COVID-19 infection, do they still need the vaccine?

Yes, people that have been previously diagnosed with COVID-19 should still receive the vaccine. Although having the virus may provide some protection from getting sick again, we do not know how long that protection lasts.

Additional Resources

Vaccines for children: What to expect at the vaccination appointment

Caring for Kids: COVID-19 Vaccination for Children and Youth

CHEO COVID-19 Immunization for Children and Youth