



## **FAQ About COVID-19 Vaccines for Children with Diabetes**

### **Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe if my child is living with diabetes?**

Diabetes Canada supports the advice of the government of Canada regarding the use of COVID-19 vaccines for most children aged 5 and up including those who are living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Most children benefit from the COVID-19 vaccine for the prevention of severe complications from COVID-19. Diabetes Canada recommends that everyone living with diabetes get vaccinated against COVID-19 when they are eligible unless they have a medical reason to not take the vaccine.

### **Were there any children with diabetes in the vaccine trials?**

The pharmaceutical company (Pfizer-BioNTech) has not published specific information on the number of children living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes in their clinical trials. However, the [clinical trials](#) did not exclude children with diabetes. The US Food and Drug Administration ([FDA report on the Comirnaty \(Pfizer-BioNTech\) vaccine for children aged 5 to <12](#)) noted that pre-existing health conditions were present in the trial.

### **What are the common side effects for children receiving the COVID vaccine?**

Side effects reported in the childhood clinical trials were headache, fatigue, muscle pain, or chills that lasted between one to two days. There were no reports of severe side effects. In adolescents, the most reported side effects, which typically lasted one to three days, were pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, chills, muscle pain, fever and joint pain. Most side effects were reported after the second dose. And zero participants discontinued the trial due to adverse effect.

All these are common reactions to vaccination and go away in a few days. If you have questions about your child getting the vaccine, please discuss your specific circumstance with a member of your child's diabetes care team.

### **Can the vaccine make my child sick?**

There is no evidence the COVID-19 vaccine is making children with or without diabetes sick, but mild side effects were reported in the clinical trials (see previous question on vaccine side effects).



### **Does the vaccine interfere with the insulin action or dose?**

There are no data to indicate that the COVID-19 vaccine interferes with insulin. If your child is feeling unwell after being vaccinated, it is important to practice [sick day management](#).

### **Is getting COVID-19 better than getting the vaccine for my child's immunity?**

No. If your child contracts COVID-19, the risk of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is more serious than the mild side effects that might occur with the vaccine.

### **Can my child get the flu vaccine at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Diabetes Canada recommends both vaccines to prevent severe illness. It is safe to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines, like the flu shot. However, at this time, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends that children aged five to 11 receive the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days before, or 14 days after, any other vaccine, including the flu shot (unless they get the OK from their health-care provider). This is simply a precautionary measure to better monitor for possible side effects. Check with your local public health region on the timing of these vaccines.

### **I've heard that children don't get seriously ill with COVID-19. Why should I get my child vaccinated against COVID-19?**

While less frequent than in the adult population, some children still get quite sick with COVID-19.

Although the mortality rate for COVID-19 in children is substantially lower than that in adults, COVID-19 was among the top 10 leading causes of death for children 5 to 14 years of age between January and May 2021 in the United States (as reported in the [FDA review of the COVID-19 vaccine for children](#)).

The benefits of being vaccinated outweigh potential risks that could be associated with these vaccines, as well as the risks of contracting COVID-19. All the COVID vaccines approved for use in Canada dramatically reduce the risk of hospitalization, severe illness, and death due to COVID.

### **Are there other benefits to getting my child vaccinated?**

Beyond the protection from the virus, getting the COVID vaccine will also prevent children from spreading COVID-19 to others. Immunization protects individuals and communities by preventing the spread of disease. As more people are immunized, the disease risk for everyone is reduced.



There is also a range of benefits to children's social well-being and mental health. The pandemic has resulted in disruptions to family routines, school and other educational activities, play, and sports, as well as separation from friends, grandparents, and other close family members. Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 gets us one step closer to resuming activities that will boost the mental health and physical well-being of children in Canada.

### **What if I have more questions?**

We encourage you to speak with your child's diabetes care team to determine what's best for you. They can discuss the risks and benefits for your child's situation and provide specific recommendations. You can also consult with local public health in your specific region if you have questions about COVID-19 in general.

For more information:

[Immunize Canada](#)

[NACI COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for adolescents](#)

[NACI COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for children 5 to 11 years of age](#)

[Diabetes Canada's COVID-19 and Diabetes page](#)

[Childhood Diabetes and COVID-19: Vaccines \(McMaster Children's Hospital\)](#)

[Canadian Paediatric Society: COVID-19 vaccines and children](#)

1300 - 522 University Avenue, Toronto, ON, M5G 2R5  
Call us: 1-800-BANTING (226-8464)  
[Diabetes.ca](http://Diabetes.ca)

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