

# DEDICATED COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINICS FOR YORK REGION YOUTH AGES 12 TO 17 AND THEIR FAMILIES

May 27, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Health Canada has authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for use in youth ages 12+. Youth who have had their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday are now invited to book an appointment for their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Family members age 12+ who have not received a first dose are also encouraged to book an appointment at the same time.

## DEDICATED YOUTH CLINICS

York Region Public Health is working closely with school boards and other community partners to make accessing the COVID-19 vaccine as seamless and convenient as possible for youth and their families.

Appointments will be available during normal mass vaccination clinic hours and dedicated hours will also be set aside from 3:30 p.m. to close on May 27, 28, 31 and June 1 to accommodate school and work schedules.

Dedicated youth and family clinic days will be held Saturday May 29 and Sunday May 30, 2021.

## HOW TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT

To book an appointment or for more information on clinic locations and appointment availability please visit [york.ca/COVID19Vaccine](http://york.ca/COVID19Vaccine). Most clinics offer vaccines by appointment only; do not visit a clinic site without scheduled appointment unless the clinic is currently offering walk-ins.

Please bring the following to your appointment:

- Ontario Health Card (OHIP) if you have one

Additional information on how to prepare for your appointment and videos of what to expect at the clinic are available at [york.ca/COVID19VaccineBeforeYouGo](http://york.ca/COVID19VaccineBeforeYouGo)

## WHY GET VACCINATED?

COVID-19 infection can have serious consequences for all age groups, including young people, particularly given the circulation of new variants of concern. We encourage all residents who are eligible to get a vaccine, but we understand parents, caregivers and adolescents may have questions.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675  
TTY 1-866-512-6228  
[york.ca/COVID19Vaccine](http://york.ca/COVID19Vaccine)



This is an important health decision and we encourage you to have discussions with your children and youth about the risks and benefits of getting vaccinated. We have included some frequently asked questions to help you and your family make an informed decision.

Vaccinating all who are eligible, including youth, will help to reduce the number of cases of COVID-19 in our community and allow youth to get back to the activities they enjoy. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to stop the spread of COVID-19.

For more information please visit [york.ca/COVID19vaccineinfo](https://york.ca/COVID19vaccineinfo)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### IS THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE SAFE FOR MY CHILD?

All [vaccines for COVID-19](#) authorized for use in Canada have been evaluated by Health Canada, using rigorous standards. Health Canada will continue to monitor all vaccines to make sure they are safe and effective.

Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is the first COVID-19 vaccine to [be authorized by Health Canada](#) for use in adolescents. After completing a thorough and independent scientific review of the evidence, Health Canada has determined this vaccine is safe and effective at preventing COVID-19 when used in children between 12 and 15 years of age.

### HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE VACCINE?

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been demonstrated to be highly effective at protecting against COVID-19 for individuals 12 and over. The Pfizer-BioNTech clinical trial studied 2,260 youth aged 12 to 15 years old in the United States. In the trial, there were 18 cases of COVID-19 in the group that did not get the vaccine (the “placebo” group) compared to zero cases in the vaccinated group. Based on these results, the vaccine was calculated to be 100% effective in the trial.

### WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE VACCINE?

Most children and youth with COVID-19 have mild symptoms or none at all; however, some children with COVID-19 can get very sick. Children can also spread COVID-19 to other people. Vaccinating children protects them from getting sick and reduces virus spread within their household and the community.

Side effects after vaccination are often part of the body's natural response to a vaccine. Side effects are usually mild and temporary, only lasting for a few hours or days. The clinical trial showed adolescents 12 to 15 years of age experienced similar side effects as adults after both the first and second dose. Side effects are usually not serious and do not last long.

Side effects within 7 days after both dose 1 and dose 2 can include:

- pain at the injection site
- fatigue
- headache
- chills
- muscle pain
- fever
- joint pain
- injection site swelling
- injection site redness
- swollen lymph nodes
- nausea

## DO I HAVE TO MONITOR MY CHILD AFTER THEY HAVE THE VACCINE?

Following vaccination, your child or youth will be asked to sit in an observation area for 15 minutes to allow public health to monitor them for any adverse effects.

You can also check in with them periodically after their vaccine to see if they are experiencing any of the common cause side effects. Serious side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine are rare; however, if your child is severely unwell call 911 and seek medical attention right away, or if they develop any of the following adverse reactions within three days of receiving the vaccine:

- Hives
- Swelling of face or mouth
- Trouble breathing
- Very pale colour and serious drowsiness
- High fever (over 40°C)
- Convulsions or seizures
- Other serious symptoms

## DOES MY CHILD NEED MY CONSENT TO GET THE VACCINE?

York Region Public Health's current policy requires parental consent for the COVID-19 vaccine for 12 and 13-year-old children. Parents are still heavily involved in the health-care decisions of children in this age group and would typically accompany the child to the appointment.

For this age group, parents may have a better understanding of the child's medical history, allergies, and any recent immunizations. Children in this age group may not have the capacity to understand all the necessary elements of informed consent as it relates to this newer vaccine (e.g. how the vaccine works, benefits and risks of obtaining the vaccine, potential risks of not obtaining the vaccine).

If a parent or legal guardian is unable to accompany their 12 and/or 13-year-old child to the appointment, they can complete and sign a [consent form](#) and send it with the child to the appointment.

All parents and guardians are encouraged to speak to their children and youth about the COVID-19 vaccine, including the risks and benefits of getting vaccinated, regardless of age.

## CAN MY CHILD STILL GET COVID-19 AFTER BEING VACCINATED?

There is still a chance you can contract COVID-19 after being vaccinated and it is currently unknown if you can transmit the virus after being immunized. We do know it takes approximately two weeks after getting vaccinated to be protected. One vaccine dose is effective against getting seriously sick.

You are not considered fully vaccinated until you have had two doses. It is important to continue to follow public health measures such as physical distancing, wearing a mask, staying home if unwell and washing your hands frequently. Studies are ongoing to determine the long-term protection of COVID-19 vaccines.

## DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO BE 12 OR CAN THEY BE TURNING 12 THIS YEAR?

Individuals must be age 12 at the time of vaccination. Eligibility for this group is not based on the year of birth due to manufacturer requirements from Pfizer-BioNTech.

## MY CHILD IS AFRAID OF NEEDLES, WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP THEM?

Every effort is being made to reduce anxiety and vaccine-related fears for this age group. You can help by having discussions with your children about the risks and benefits of getting vaccinated and about what they can expect.

A parent or guardian can accompany a child to their appointment. Consider bringing items such as headphones, earphones and tablets to increase comfort at the clinic.

## WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS A DISABILITY AND MAY NOT BE COMFORTABLE AT A LARGE CLINIC?

A support person can accompany anyone with a disability to a mass vaccination clinic, if needed. Additionally, most mass vaccination sites will accommodate clients who need to be immunized in their vehicle with an in-car vaccination and observation period.

Drive-through appointments at the Canada's Wonderland mass vaccination clinic are also available for youth with disabilities on Saturday, May 29 and Sunday, May 30, 2021. Please book through these dedicated links:

- Saturday, May 29: [https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/yorkregion/Activity\\_Search/51676](https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/yorkregion/Activity_Search/51676)
- Sunday, May 30: [https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/yorkregion/Activity\\_Search/51677](https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/yorkregion/Activity_Search/51677)

If you have any difficulty booking, you can call Access York at 1-877-464-9675.

Individuals are also welcomed to bring any items that may increase their comfort at the clinic such as headphones, earphones and tablets.

We are committed to our ongoing work with partners to ensure people with disabilities can receive the accommodations needed to get a vaccine safely and comfortably.

To help prepare your child or youth for their appointment you can watch the [What to expect](#) video available at [york.ca/COVID19Vaccine](http://york.ca/COVID19Vaccine)

## WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS ALLERGIES?

If your child has experienced a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose or component of the [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#), they should **not** receive it; detailed ingredient lists are available at [canada.ca/COVID19](http://canada.ca/COVID19).

If your child experienced a less severe allergic reaction to a previous dose or a component of the [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#), you must talk to your health care provider before your child can receive the vaccine. You are required to complete an [Attestation Form](#) prior to receiving a vaccine.

The Pfizer vaccine does not contain eggs, gelatin (pork), gluten, latex, preservatives, antibiotics or aluminum.

## IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WOULD PREVENT MY CHILD GETTING A VACCINE?

The vaccine is safe for most youth, including those with a health condition such as diabetes or a weak immune system.

Speak with your child's health care provider first before they receive the vaccine if they have a/an:

- autoimmune disorder undergoing [certain treatments](#)
- weakened immunity due to illness or treatment
- bleeding disorder

In this case, you will be required to complete an [Attestation Form](#) prior to receiving a vaccine.

A consultation with a health care provider is recommended, but not required, for those who are pregnant, could be pregnant or are breastfeeding, as well as those who have an autoimmune condition, immunodeficiency condition or are immunosuppressed but are **NOT** on any of the treatments listed in the [Attestation Form](#).

Delay vaccination if your child has a fever or COVID-19 symptoms, are confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, or have received a flu shot or other vaccine in the past 14 days.

## HOW DO I BOOK AN APPOINTMENT FOR MY CHILD?

Visit [york.ca/COVID19Vaccine](http://york.ca/COVID19Vaccine) to book an appointment. Most clinics offer vaccines by appointment only; do not visit a clinic site without scheduled appointment unless the clinic is currently offering walk-ins.

## CAN I GET MY VACCINE AT THE SAME TIME?

YES! Family members age 12+ who have not received a **first** dose are also eligible to book an appointment.

## WILL MY CHILD HAVE TO WAIT FOUR MONTHS FOR THEIR SECOND DOSE?

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends an extended dose interval of up to four months in all populations for whom vaccination is recommended. However, if there is enough supply, second doses should be offered as soon as possible within the recommended interval after eligible populations have received their first dose.

York Region will follow the Provincial direction related to second doses and inform residents of any changes.

## CAN WE RETURN TO NORMAL ACTIVITIES ONCE MY CHILD HAS THEIR VACCINE?

You must continue to follow all public health measures even after getting vaccinated:

- Practice physical distancing
- Wear a mask when required
- Wash your hands frequently
- Stay home if you are unwell

Public health measures remain the foundation of the pandemic response while vaccines continue to roll out across the country. It is important that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, continue to follow recommended public health measures.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Visit [york.ca/COVID19Vaccine](https://york.ca/COVID19Vaccine) for more information and to book your appointment.