

Max Facts *For Youth*

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. You might have noticed that everyone is talking about COVID-19 vaccines. Some people are super excited and can't wait for the vaccine to be available for children ages 5 to 11, and others are worried about whether the vaccine is the right choice for them or the children they care for.

I thought it would be helpful to answer some common questions about the vaccines, so you can have conversations with the adults in your life about COVID-19, the vaccine, and what's right for you.

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



The COVID-19 Vaccine and Me

Do I have to get vaccinated?

No. But pretty much everyone agrees that if you can get vaccinated, you should. Some places might also soon require kids to have their COVID-19 vaccine to participate in things like sports, going to the movies, flying on a plane, and going to restaurants, like they do for youth 12+.

When will it available?

We don't know yet! We think it will be soon, but it won't be before all the data is studied and the people in charge of making sure it's safe say it can be given.

Do I need two needles, like adults?

Yes. Just like some of the vaccines you had when you were a baby (like mumps and measles), you will need two shots to make sure you're protected.



Is the vaccine the same one as adults get?

Yes. The vaccine will be the same, but the dose is smaller. And just like the vaccine for adults (and kids 12+!), there may be different brands of the vaccine available when it's time for you to get your shot. The person giving you the shot will make sure you get the right one for you.

Is it safe to get the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as another vaccine, like the flu shot?

Yes! Speak to your health care provider if you're worried, but the recommendation for most people is that you don't have to wait. We know from giving lots of different types of vaccines for many years that this is safe to do. In fact, there's even research that shows that your body could respond to about 10,000 vaccines at one time!

Do kids really need the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Everyone does! Getting the vaccine is one of the best ways to protect yourself from COVID-19. Kids can get and spread COVID-19 and have symptoms that last for a long time. Getting your vaccine also adds to the total number of people with vaccines, which helps protect people who can get sick more easily like babies, grandparents, or people with cancer.

Is it my choice whether I get the vaccine?

Of course! If you can understand the pros and cons to the decision you are making, the law says you can make your own health care decision. Reading this and talking to trusted adults is an important step towards understanding your decision about the COVID-19 vaccine. When you go for your needle, the person giving you your shot will ask if it's okay before going ahead. If you are too young to make this decision on your own, an adult can help you. You can ask as many questions as you want before you choose to get the vaccine.

What if I want to get the vaccine, but my parents/caregivers don't want me to?

If you can understand the pros and cons of getting the vaccine, then you should be able to make that choice yourself. If you are in this situation, reach out to a grown up that you trust — like a teacher, a neighbour, or a relative — to help you figure out what to do.



About the Vaccine

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes! The vaccine has been tested a lot, is safe, and is being used around the world. Billions of people, including lots of kids 12+, have already had the vaccine.

How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?

The vaccine that kids will get is a mRNA vaccine. One of the smart things these vaccines do, is teach your body to make the antibodies that latch onto bits of the COVID-19 virus to stop them from infecting you. This video made for kids can tell you more about how it works.

Does getting a vaccine hurt?

Some people say that it feels like a tiny pinch, but others say they can't even feel it!

If needles make you worried, tell your caregiver and the person giving you the vaccine. They have lots of strategies to help. (Psst...caregivers, read this from SKIP for some great tips and videos!)

What are the side effects of getting the vaccine?

After getting the vaccine, you may have some side effects like a sore arm or feeling tired the next day. These are totally normal and mean that the vaccine is working. But a lot of kids don't have any side effects, and that's okay too!

Don't forget. After getting your shot, you still need to wear a mask, wash your hands often, and practice social distancing. When even more people get vaccinated these rules will change — we can't wait for that!