

## How to prepare your child for a covid vaccination

*This guidance provides basic information only. This document is not intended to provide or take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or legal advice.*

Please read this document to know what to expect for your upcoming vaccine appointment.

### What do I need to bring to the appointment?

- Their health card/Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card (even if it is expired)
  - » If you do not have an OHIP card that is okay. They can still get vaccinated if you do not have an OHIP card, or if their OHIP card is expired. Please bring another form of government-issued identification (ID) such as a birth certificate.
- Immunization record, if available, to keep track of the COVID-19 vaccine
- Proof of COVID-19 immunization from first dose, if available and applicable
- An allergy form, if they are allergic to a component of the vaccine
- Any assistive devices needed (e.g., scooter, wheelchair, cane) and items to help pass the time (e.g., cell phone, book, favourite stuffy, toy)
- Small peanut free snack for the child for after
- Electronics
- Headphones for noise control
- Glasses and/or hearing aid, if required.
- Mask that covers the mouth, nose and chin
- A parent or guardian. Parental or guardian consent will be required at the clinic
- If they are nervous about the vaccination, bring something to help distract them, such as a mobile device, headphones for music, or a book

### What do I need to do to prepare for the appointment?

- Read the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet: for Children](#) and follow up with your regular health care provider (such as your family doctor, nurse practitioner or pediatrician) with any questions you have
- Do not stop taking any regular medication and they should continue and eat meals as usual
- Make sure they eat before coming to the clinic to prevent feeling faint or dizzy while being vaccinated
- Wear a loose-fitting top or a t-shirt so that the health care provider can easily access the upper arm for the vaccination
- Please do not wear any scented products
- Numbing cream: [Needle pokes: Reducing pain with numbing cream \(aboutkidshealth.ca\)](#)
  - » Important: **PLACEMENT is the key.** Numbing cream can take up to 30 minutes to work and must be placed in the correct spot prior to your appointment. If it is not placed in the right spot, the numbing cream will not help minimize the discomfort.

- Medicating before the appointment: Prophylactic oral analgesia (e.g., acetaminophen or ibuprofen) is not recommended. These medications are only recommended for use in managing adverse events (e.g., fever and pain) if they occur after immunization. There is currently no demonstrated benefit of administering oral analgesics for the prevention of immunization injection pain. (1)
- Please do not arrive more than 10 minutes before the appointment time to avoid crowding at the clinic
- You may need to wait outside before your appointment. Please dress for the weather.

### **What can I expect when I arrive at the appointment?**

- Health care providers are being very careful to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when providing immunizations. Clinic staff will take every precaution to ensure your health and safety during your visit. Public health measures, such as physical distancing, hand sanitization, mask-wearing will be in place at clinics. All health care providers, patients, other staff, and visitors need to follow all public health measures in the clinic. Please read and follow any signs or instructions provided at the clinic
- You will be asked to provide an OHIP card or identification
- You will be asked to answer a series of questions to see if you or they have the signs or symptoms associated with COVID-19 before entering the clinic (like the health screening you do before you come to school for example)
- You will be asked questions about their medical history (for example, about any allergies you have)
- Everyone will be asked to wear a mask while at the clinic, to clean your hands, and practice physical distancing from others (at least 2 metres/6 feet)
- The health care provider will direct you on how to hold or position
- They will be asked to stay for 15-30 minutes after receiving the vaccine to monitor for any unexpected changes in health or allergic reactions

### **What if I have allergies?**

- The health care provider at the vaccine clinic will ask if your child has allergies and talk through what is right for them – you may be asked to wait longer at the clinic after their immunization. The [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet: for Children](#) has details about the vaccine ingredients, including polyethylene glycol (PEG), tromethamine, and/or polysorbate 80.

For more detailed recommendations for individuals with allergies, please consult Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations guidance document.

### **What if they have other medical conditions?**

Please consult the Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations guidance document for information. If they have a medical condition for which you receive ongoing treatment, you may wish to speak to your health care provider about whether the vaccine is right for you.

What if I fainted the last time I got a vaccine or I have a fear of needles? If you have fainted, or became dizzy with previous vaccinations or procedures, or if you have a high level of fear about injections, your child should still get the vaccine. Tell the health care provider at the clinic so that appropriate supports can be offered.

## COVID-19 Vaccination After Care

### What should I do right after they receive the vaccine?

- After your vaccine, they should stay in the clinic for 15 to 30 minutes. This is to make sure they do not have an allergic reaction. Allergic reactions do not happen often. Staff giving vaccines know how to treat allergic reactions. Let staff know if you notice a skin rash, swelling of their face or mouth or throat, problems breathing, and/or feel unwell.
- If waiting inside the clinic, be sure to leave your mask on and remain at least 2 metres/6 feet away from others
- Use the alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands before leaving the clinic

### What should I expect in the next few days?

- Your child may have some side effects from the vaccine. They should go away in a few days.
- Common expected side effects include: pain, swelling and colour changes (e.g. red, purple) at the site where the needle was given. Applying a cool, damp cloth where the vaccine was given may help with soreness
- Other symptoms may include: tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, and fever. If needed, pain or fever medication (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen) may help with pain or fever.
- Serious side effects after receiving the vaccine are rare. However, should any of the following adverse reactions develop within three days of receiving the vaccine, seek medical attention right away or call 911 if severely unwell: hives, swelling of the face or mouth or throat, trouble breathing, serious drowsiness, high fever (over 40°C), convulsions or seizures, chest pain, or other serious symptoms (e.g., “pins and needles” or numbness)
- If you are concerned about any reactions you experience after receiving the vaccine, contact your health care provider. You can also contact your local public health unit to ask questions or to report an adverse reaction.

### Things to remember after you receive the vaccine

- Continue wearing a mask, staying at least 2 metres from others and limiting/avoiding contact with others outside of your household
- Keep this sheet (or other immunization record) AND your printed COVID-19 immunization receipt from the vaccination today in a safe place and bring it with you for follow-up COVID-19 vaccinations as instructed by the vaccination clinic

1. *Appendix D - Reducing Immunization Injection Pain (bccdc.ca)*