

COR-2021-164321

MEMO

TO: Parents of Children in Kindergarten to Grade Six

FROM: Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, Chief Medical Officer of Health

DATE: November 23, 2021

SUBJECT: COVID-19 vaccination for children aged 5 to 11 years

On Friday, November 19, 2021 Health Canada approved the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11. Through a rigorous scientific review, Health Canada has determined this vaccine to be safe and over 90% effective at preventing COVID-19 in children with no serious side effects identified. Children in this age group will require two doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered at least eight weeks apart. To achieve optimal protection, it is very important that your child receive both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

There are many reasons why vaccination for this age group is important:

- While children with COVID-19 usually have milder symptoms than older individuals, it is still a very serious virus that can cause severe illness, regardless of age. There have been no pediatric hospital admissions due to COVID-19 in our province. However, other jurisdictions with overall higher rates of COVID have seen an increase in cases and more severe illness in children associated with the Delta variant.
- Offering the vaccine to this age group will not only protect children from infection, it will help prevent the spread of the virus to others, such as family members that may be at higher risk of complications from COVID-19.
- In-person learning is essential for the health and well-being of children. Excellent rates of uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine in this age group, as we have seen for other childhood vaccines, will decrease the risk of school closures due to COVID-19.

The COVID-19 vaccine will be administered through a combination of school-based clinics and community clinics. Parents can choose which option works best for them. Every child in Newfoundland and Labrador will have access to a COVID-19 vaccine over the coming weeks. More information will be available through your schools. You can also visit [Get the Shot - COVID-19 Vaccine \(gov.nl.ca\)](https://www.gov.nl.ca/health/covid-19/vaccine) for the most up to date information.

There are about 35,000 children in Newfoundland and Labrador eligible for the vaccine and I strongly encourage parents and guardians of children in this age category to vaccinate your child against COVID-19. Newfoundland and Labrador has traditionally led the country in uptake for childhood vaccinations. I have every confidence that this pattern will extend to the COVID-19 vaccine as well.

Thank you for rising to the challenge of COVID-19 again and again over the past two years. We have done well by working together. Let's continue that spirit of cooperation as we strive to protect our children.