COVID-19 vaccination information
Parent/legal guardian information on Pfizer (Comirnaty) for children aged 5–11 years (SWPI9475)

A copy of this information sheet should be given to the parent/legal guardian to read carefully and allow time to ask any questions about the vaccination.

Reasons for vaccinating 5–11-year-olds against COVID-19
Coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause serious ongoing health issues and sometimes death. It is a new virus and we continue to learn about it. We do know that young people have a lower risk of severe complications if they are infected with COVID-19 compared to older people.

- It will protect children from rare but serious complications of COVID-19, such as multi-system inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C). Overseas, MIS-C has been reported in children who catch COVID-19. This can cause multiple parts of the body to become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, eyes, brain, kidneys, skin and gastrointestinal tract. MIS-C can be serious but most children who are diagnosed with MIS-C generally recover following medical care.
- It will restrict the virus from spreading to the child’s immediate circle of friends and family.
- Vaccinating children will limit outbreaks and classroom closures which impacts on teaching and children’s mental health.
- Helping stop other variants of COVID-19 from emerging.

How does the vaccination work?
The paediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is an mRNA vaccine. It is designed to encourage the child’s immune system to make antibodies to the spike protein of the virus. This means if your child were to ever get infected with the COVID-19 virus, their body is better prepared to fight the illness and reduce its severity. Pfizer’s clinical trial data reportedly shows 90.7% efficacy against COVID-19 among young children.

How is the Pfizer vaccine given?
The vaccine is given via an injection into the upper arm by a health professional who has been trained in giving the COVID-19 vaccine. Children aged 5–11 years will receive two 10 microgram doses usually eight weeks apart. This is one-third of the dose that is given to children 12 years and older and adults.

Children must remain in the vaccination clinic for observation for at least 15 minutes after vaccination. Depending on your child’s medical history, you may be asked to wait in the clinic for 30 minutes with your child. To get the full benefit of the vaccine, children will need to have both injections. Children may not be fully protected against COVID-19 until 7–14 days after their second dose.

The interval between the first and second dose can be shortened to a minimum of three weeks in special circumstances such as in an outbreak response or prior to international travel.

Is the Pfizer vaccine safe?
It is normal to have questions about vaccines. Parents are encouraged to talk with their GP or seek further information from trusted and reliable websites, such as the Australian Department of Health, Queensland Health, or the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) websites.

Over four million children aged 5–11 years in the United States have received at least one dose of the paediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccine effectiveness data from real world experience is expected in the coming months for the 5–11 years age groups. Ongoing clinical trials report that paediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine was 90.7% effective at preventing laboratory-confirmed symptomatic COVID-19 from day 7 after the second dose.

No children aged 5 to 11 years in Pfizer’s clinical trials experienced myocarditis (inflammation of the heart) or pericarditis (inflammation of the lining outside the heart). Myocarditis and pericarditis has been reported in teenagers and young adults, particularly males. This is a rare side effect of an mRNA vaccine and in almost all cases they have recovered fully. Myocarditis is a much more common complication following infection with COVID-19 than from getting vaccinated.

Who should not get the Pfizer vaccine?
You should not get a COVID-19 vaccination if you have had any of the following:
- anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) to a previous dose of the Pfizer vaccine

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• anaphylaxis after exposure to any ingredient of the Pfizer vaccine*
• confirmed mastocytosis (build up of too many cells in the body) with recurrent anaphylaxis that requires treatment.

If your child has had an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis to anything else, including after receiving any other vaccine, they can still get the vaccine, but you must tell the immunisation provider beforehand. If the child has had any other vaccinations in the past week, tell your immunisation provider to make sure the timing is right.

What if my child has pre-existing conditions?
Children with a history of any of the following heart conditions should seek advice from their treating GP or specialist about the best timing of Pfizer vaccination and any other precautions that are recommended:
• recent (i.e. within the past three months) myocarditis or pericarditis
• acute rheumatic fever (i.e. with active myocardial inflammation) or acute rheumatic heart disease
• acute decompensated heart failure.

Tell your doctor if your child had myocarditis or pericarditis diagnosed after a previous dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (such as Pfizer or Moderna).

Children with confirmed mastocytosis or recurrent idiopathic anaphylaxis can still be vaccinated but should be reviewed by an allergist (allergy doctor) first.

What to expect after your child’s Pfizer vaccination

All medicines and vaccines can cause side effects and most of these are minor effects. However, your child might experience some of the following side effects. If you are worried, contact your GP.

Common side effects
• injection site pain/swelling, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, joint pain.

Less common side effects
• injection site redness/itching, nausea, enlarged lymph nodes, feeling unwell, pain in the limb, insomnia (trouble sleeping).

These side effects are usually mild and usually go away within a day or two. If your child experiences pain at the injection site or fever, headaches or body aches after vaccination, they may take paracetamol or ibuprofen. These help reduce the above symptoms (children do not need to take paracetamol or ibuprofen before vaccination). If there is swelling at the injection site, you can use a cold compress.

Rare side effects
• anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction)
• myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart). Cases have been reported predominantly after the second dose in males aged 16–30 years.

After you have left the vaccination location, seek medical attention if:
• You think your child is having an allergic reaction. Call 000 if your child is experiencing severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest pain, a fast heartbeat or collapses.
• You are worried about a potential side effect or your child has new or unexpected symptoms.
• Your child has an expected side effect of the vaccine which has not gone away after a few days.

What if my child shows symptoms after vaccination?

Some side effects from COVID-19 vaccination might be similar to symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever). COVID-19 vaccines do not contain any live virus and cannot cause COVID-19.

You do not need to get your child COVID-19 tested or isolate if your child develops general symptoms like fever, headache or tiredness in the first two days after vaccination. If the child develops new symptoms more than two days after vaccination, COVID-19 testing is recommended because even though the vaccine has been shown to be very effective, there is still a chance the child may get COVID-19. Importantly, even after vaccination, Queenslanders will still be encouraged to wash their hands regularly and maintain physical distancing to help protect themselves and others.

Where can I get more information or ask questions?


Stay informed with up-to-date information from reliable websites, such as COVID-19 vaccination patient information and www.qld.gov.au/covid19vaccine.

For more information on the safety of these vaccines, please see: www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines.

Call 134 COVID (13 42 68) 24 hours, 7 days a week for information on the vaccine or assistance with vaccination bookings or appointment enquiries. You can also ask for an interpreter – it is free.

*Pfizer-Comirnaty BNT162b2 [mRNA] COVID-19 Vaccine includes the following ingredients: ((4-hydroxybutyl)azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis[2-hexyldecanoate] (ALC-0315), 2-[(polyethylene glycol)-2000]-N,N-ditetradecylacetamide (ALC-0159), Distearoylphosphatidylcholine (DSPC), cholesterol, sucrose, trometamol, water for injection.