



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
& MEDICAL SERVICES

COVID-19 **VACCINE** for children aged 5-11 years old



World Health
Organization
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for the South Pacific

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for every child




Why should your child get vaccinated against COVID-19?

The COVID-19 vaccines work by triggering a person's immune system to produce antibodies and teaches the body how to recognise and defend itself against the COVID-19 virus.

Children are as likely to be infected with COVID-19 as adults. With many children back in school and participating in extracurricular activities, COVID-19 vaccination is critical to preventing infection and serious illness, as well as slowing the spread of COVID-19.



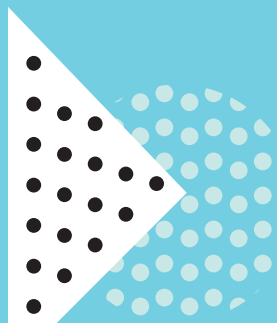
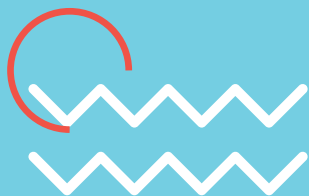


How will your child benefit from the COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines are important for children to ensure they are protected against severe illness, hospitalisation and death from the virus.

Vaccinating children will:

- Prevent them from getting seriously sick even if they do get COVID-19.
- Keep them in school and help them safely participate in sports, other group activities and meet friends and relatives.



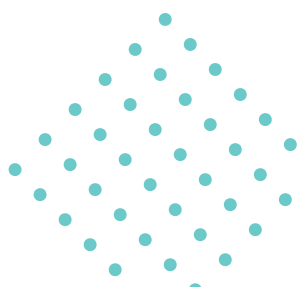
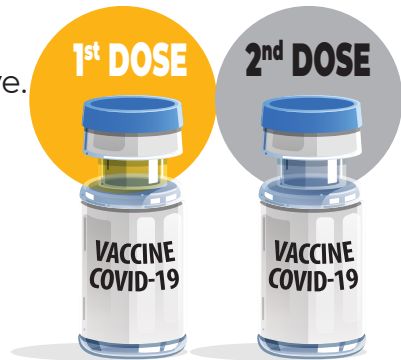


How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will your child require?

Children aged 5 to 11 years old will require 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. The 2nd dose will be given 6 weeks after the 1st dose is administered.

Children will receive a lower dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccine will contain the same active ingredients given to individuals aged 12 years and above.



**...Protect your
child with
two doses of
the COVID-19
vaccine...**

How do you know when your child will be due for the 2nd dose?

Your child will require 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine with the 2nd dose given 6 weeks after the 1st dose.

The date for the 2nd dose of the COVID-19 vaccine will be written on the vaccination card.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for children?

The COVID-19 vaccine authorised for use among children aged 5-11 years old has shown to be highly effective at protecting children from severe illness. Through continued safety monitoring the vaccine has been found to be safe for children.

The Fiji Medicinal Products Board has authorised the use of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5-11 years old.



SAFETY OF THE **VACCINE**

The safety of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine was tested in more than 3,500 children aged 5 to 11 years in a clinical trial and safety expansion group.

The trial showed that the vaccine is safe in children and most side effects were mild.

In the United States, vaccination of children aged 5 to 11 years with the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine started on 4 November 2021. As at 9 December 2021, more than 5 million children in this age group have received at least one dose and more than 2 million have received both doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

No specific safety concerns have been identified in this age group in this large, real-world population, where the number of children vaccinated is already greater than the approximately 2.3 million children aged 5–11 years in Australia



THE VACCINATION PROCESS



Children aged 5-11 years old will receive their COVID-19 vaccine at their nearest health centre/facility.



Prior to vaccination, parents/guardians will be provided with a consent form that should be read, signed and submitted to the vaccination team.



The Ministry of Health and Medical Services will provide prior information on registration and signing of consent forms. Information on registration sites will be available to parents accordingly.

For further information on COVID-19 vaccination arrangement for children, contact:





Vodafone numbers: 9906407/9906420
Digicel numbers: 7474272/7474273



CARING FOR YOUR CHILD AFTER **VACCINATION**

What happens after your child gets the COVID-19 vaccine?

After getting vaccinated, the child will have to wait for 20-30 minutes before being dismissed. This is done so that medical staff can monitor the child for any serious allergic reaction following vaccination.



When at home:

Potential side effects

Children may have some side effects from COVID-19 vaccination, which are similar to the side effects that many children experience after getting routine vaccines.

Common side effects

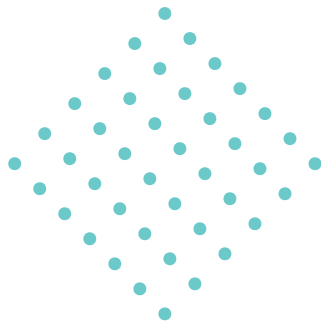


After getting the vaccine, your child may experience the following:

On the arm where he/she got the shot:




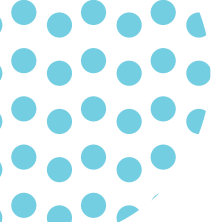
- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling



Throughout the rest of their body:

- | | | |
|------------|------------|----------|
| • Headache | • Fatigue | • Nausea |
| • Chills | • Vomiting | • Fever |





These side effects are normal signs that their body is building protection and should go away in a few days. They don't last long and should not discourage your child from getting their 2nd dose or going about their daily life. If your child has side effects, you can:



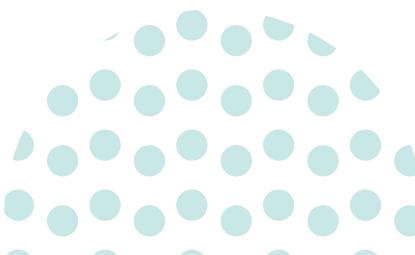

Give paracetamol to relieve the pain



Ensure that your child gets enough rest and stays hydrated

- **It is not recommended to give pain relievers before vaccination.**

If your child does not have any side-effects after vaccination, it does not mean that the vaccine is not working. Everyone reacts differently to vaccines.


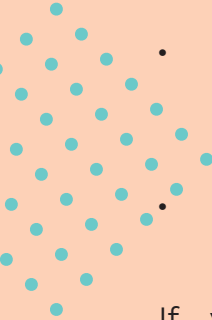




Less common side-effects:

Swollen glands

Extremely rare side-effects

- Chest pain; shortness of breath, feelings of having a fast beating, fluttering or pounding heart (symptoms of myocarditis/pericarditis)
 - Temporary paralysis or weakness on one side of the face (symptoms of Bell's Palsy)
- 
- 

If your child is experiencing any of these symptoms after vaccination, immediately seek medical care at your nearest health centre/hospital.

The medical team will thoroughly examine your child and treat any symptoms. They will further investigate the symptoms to determine the cause.

It is important to remember that the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks.



What if my child has COVID-19 symptoms?

If your child has symptoms of COVID-19, he/she should stay home to fully recover before receiving the vaccine. Ensure that your child no longer has any symptoms before getting vaccinated.

Things to consider before your child gets the COVID-19 vaccine

Inform the health worker if your child has:

- Any medical condition or severe past allergic reaction to a vaccine injection. These are important to mention so that the vaccination team is aware.
- A bleeding disorder or if a child is taking a blood-thinning medication (anticoagulant). This will help determine whether it is safe for your child to have an intramuscular injection.
- A heart condition.

However, Children with a history of any of the following conditions can receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine:

Recent (within the past 3 months) myocarditis or pericarditis (heart inflammation)

Acute rheumatic fever (with active heart inflammation) or acute rheumatic heart disease

- Acute decompensated heart failure.
- Tell the vaccinator if your child has been diagnosed with myocarditis or pericarditis after a previous dose of Pfizer.



Children with Weakened Immune Systems

It is strongly recommended that children with medical conditions such as rheumatic heart disease, non-communicable diseases, asthma and kidney infection receive the COVID-19 vaccination. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is not a live vaccine. It is safe for children with medical conditions. Children with medical conditions, including those living with HIV, have a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, including a higher risk of death.

Preparing for COVID-19 vaccination: talking to your children

Children might have varying feelings about COVID-19 vaccination. Many children will be OK with it while some may be worried about getting an injection.

Some might also have heard misinformation from friends or other sources and feel worried about the vaccine.

As parents and guardians, you can help by talking to your child about vaccination before they get vaccinated.

For example, some children might prefer to be told on the morning of their vaccination day. This will stop them from overthinking things and feeling anxious. You could say something like: *"We're going to see the doctor or nurse for your COVID vaccine which is medicine that goes into your arm. Then we'll go for a special treat (like ice cream or something the child likes)"*.

Other children might prefer to be told a few days before the vaccination, so they have time to prepare and ask questions. For example, they might want to know what will happen during vaccination, why they need vaccination and whether it will hurt?

It's always best to give the child clear, accurate, age-appropriate information that they can understand.

For example:

- For a child who is worried about the injection, you could say: *"The needle might pinch a bit, but it's over very quickly"*.
- For a child who wants to know how vaccination works, you could say: *"The medicine helps your body make blood soldiers. If you get the virus, the soldiers can fight it for you"*.

If you don't know the answer to a question, tell your child you'll find out. Make sure you get back to them. Let your child know that they can ask the vaccinator any questions they have on the day of vaccination.





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