

# COVID-19 Vaccine Q&A

Update July 28, 2022

## Why should my 6month-4year old get the COVID-19 vaccine?

### COVID-19 burden of disease in children

Most children ≤ 5 years of age infected with SARS-CoV-2 have mild disease severity and are infrequently hospitalized; however, some children experience severe disease, including previously healthy children.

- Population level estimates of hospitalization and ICU admission in pediatric populations have increased since Omicron became the predominant variant.
- Children who are considered medically fragile or have an underlying condition are in general at higher risk of severe outcomes of COVID-19.
- According to a recent report, vaccinated children 5-11 years of age have half the rate of hospitalization compared to unvaccinated children.\* We expect vaccines to also protect children <5 years of age against severe outcomes including hospitalization.

Children who have had COVID-19 are at risk of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), a rare but serious post-infection complication that usually requires acute care hospital admission. There is some indirect evidence that mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (e.g., Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty [30 mcg]) decrease this risk in adolescent populations.

While evidence is limited in children 5 years of age and younger, SARS-CoV-2 infection may also lead to post-COVID condition/post-acute COVID syndrome (“Long COVID”).

### What if my child has already had COVID-19?

Canadian seroprevalence studies from Quebec and British Columbia estimate that 30% to 70% of children under the age of 5 years have been previously infected with SARS-CoV-2; most of these infections occurred since Omicron became the dominant variant.

Evidence from adult populations suggests immunity by previous infection alone is inferior to immunity conferred by vaccination with a primary series of a COVID-19 vaccine. More importantly, **hybrid immunity (vaccinated + infected) appears to confer stronger immunity that is more durable and of greater breadth than either vaccination or previous infection alone.** Thus, children who have had COVID-19 infection are still recommended to be immunized and will likely have more durable protection as a result.

### What are some other considerations?

Surveys done in British Columbia and Canada show that many parents want to protect their children as soon as vaccines become available. While most COVID-19 infections in children are mild, and hospitalizations rare, people who get COVID-19 infections still need to isolate for five days which can be problematic for young children and their parents. Proof of vaccination also supports travel without quarantine requirements which can be a consideration for some parents.

#### \* REFERENCES

- NACI (July 14, 2022) [Recommendations on the use of Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine in children 6 months to 5 years of age](#)
- SPIKEVAX™ (July 14, 2022) [PRODUCT MONOGRAPH](#)
- Shi DS, Whitaker M, Marks KJ, et al. (2022) [Hospitalizations of Children Aged 5–11 Years with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19](#) — COVID-NET, 14 States, March 2020–February 2022. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep