Focused Covid Communication

NOW OR WAIT?
COVID-19 mRNA VACCINES

For children aged 5 to 11 years

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

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Reasons to vaccinate a child now:

- Much lower risk of serious illness and death from Covid-19.
- Lower risk of complications from infection (Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C)*, or Long Covid).
- May be able to continue to go to school and do activities after a Covid-19 exposure.
- Lower risk of spreading Covid-19 to others.
- Able to safely return to sports, clubs, and sleepovers sooner.
- Able to travel without quarantine.

Reasons some people wait to vaccinate a child:

- Mild side effects may temporarily interrupt plans.
- Unclear risk of very rare vaccine side effects (e.g., myocarditis).
- Children living in areas with very low numbers of Covid-19 infections have a lower chance of being exposed at this time.†

†Covid-19 case numbers can change very quickly.

Choosing to wait can be a short-term plan. Follow public health advice to lower the risk of Covid-19 while you decide.

Need more information to decide? Here's what we know so far.

What we know about Covid-19 infections:

- Covid-19 is very contagious. Most children are expected to be exposed to Covid-19 within a year.
- Most children with Covid-19 infections will have mild illness.
- Some children, including children with no health conditions, can get very sick and die from Covid-19.
- Children can get Long Covid and have health problems that last weeks to months, or possibly longer.
- Myocarditis (inflammation of the heart) is much more common and severe after a Covid-19 infection than after a vaccine.
- Covid-19 can cause Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in children (MIS-C).* MIS-C is most common in children aged 5 to 11.

↳ **MIS-C is rare but very serious. It causes inflammation of the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, and stomach.*

What we know about Covid-19 mRNA vaccines:

- Vaccines protect children from getting sick with Covid-19 and lower the risk of spreading Covid-19.
- Data from teens and adults shows the health risk is much higher with a Covid-19 infection than vaccination.
- Vaccines for children aged 5 to 11 use a lower dose than the vaccines for teens and adults.
- Mild side effects (e.g., sore arm, tiredness) are common after the vaccine. They usually go away after a few days.
- Long-term side effects are not expected. Vaccine ingredients are gone from the body in 2 to 3 days.
- Vaccines do not affect fertility, genes (DNA), or hormones.
- Myocarditis from the vaccine is rare. It is expected to be even rarer in kids aged 5 to 11.

For more information on Covid-19 mRNA vaccines for children, visit:
https://uwaterloo.ca/pharmacy/sites/ca.pharmacy/files/uploads/files/faq_covid-19_vaccines_for_children.pdf
For more information on myocarditis and pericarditis, visit:
https://uwaterloo.ca/pharmacy/sites/ca.pharmacy/files/uploads/files/myocarditis_and_pericarditis_after_covid-19_vaccines.pdf
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