

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR VACCINATION

a practical guide for parents of 5 to 11 year olds



Book an Appointment



Appointments for 5 to 11 year olds to receive the COVID-19 vaccine will initially be available through Public Health clinics. To schedule an appointment, visit [GetYourShotCK.ca](https://getyourshotck.ca) or call 519.351.1010. Health Care Providers may also offer the vaccine; please contact your provider for availability. Appointments will take about 30 to 40 minutes.

Ask Questions

If you have questions, talk to your Health Care Provider, CK Public Health, or call the SickKids COVID-19 Vaccine Consult Service.



SickKids COVID-19 Vaccine Consult Service

SickKids is offering a free, confidential service that connects you with a Registered Paediatric Nurse to have your questions about children/youth and the COVID-19 vaccines answered. To book an appointment, visit www.sickkids.ca/vaccineconsult or call 437.881.3505.

Have a Family Discussion about Vaccination

Talk to children and youth about the importance of getting vaccinated using age-appropriate language. These tips may help:



- Tell them what will happen and how it will feel.
- Communicate using neutral language.
 - Try using words such as 'pressure' or 'poke' to describe how it might feel.
 - Avoid misleading information like 'it won't hurt.'
- Answer their questions and tell them what you'll do to help make it a better experience.
- Explain to your child that vaccines are important to keep them healthy.
- Focus on what you will do after they receive their vaccine (e.g. a special treat such as stickers or screen time in the waiting room, or an outing afterwards).

Plan strategies to deal with pain management or nerves

Before the vaccination appointment, talk with your child and work together to pick coping strategies based on your child's needs and preferences. The [CARD System for Parents/Caregivers is an excellent resource for preparing your child. Additional ideas include:](#)



- Distraction (e.g. toys, games, music, videos, talking, or singing)
- Relaxation techniques (e.g. deep belly breathing)
- Topical anesthetics to reduce needle pain (e.g. numbing creams and patches that you can purchase, without a prescription, from local pharmacies)



TIPS FOR THE DAY OF THE VACCINATION APPOINTMENT



Shortly Before the Appointment

- Organize what you should bring to the appointment
 - Snacks/water
 - Ontario Health Card (helpful, but not necessary)
 - Immunization record (small yellow booklet, helpful but not necessary)
 - Items for distraction (small toys, books, music etc.)
- Ensure your child has had something to eat and/or drink before the appointment.
- Dress your child in short sleeves so there is easy access to the upper arm.
- If using, apply topical anesthetic by following the manufacturer's recommendations.

During the Appointment

Please do not arrive more than 5 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Appointments at the Bradley Centre, are scheduled to minimize wait times leading up to immunization.

Steps to immunization:

1. Register at reception.
2. Receive vaccine.
3. Wait 15 minutes after vaccination to ensure your child feels well.

How parents can help their child:

- Use the pain/anxiety reduction strategies you planned with your child to help them.
- Sit child upright before, during, and after the needle.
- Let your child sit on your lap if this will help them feel secure.
- Don't hold your child too tightly, this can increase anxiety.
- Stay calm and use your normal speaking voice before, during, and after the needle.
- Start distracting your child while they are calm with videos, music, or talking.
- If your child says they want to watch the needle, that's OK too.

After the Appointment

- Talk about what went well.
- Judge how much pain your child experienced and use this information to plan what you will do to reduce your child's vaccination pain next time.
- Schedule your child's second dose for 8 weeks after their first dose.