COVID-19 vaccination

What to expect after your child's COVID-19 vaccination - advice for parents of children aged 5 to 11 years of age

January 2022

The NHS is offering the COVID-19 vaccine to all eligible children. This leaflet tells you what to expect after your child has had their vaccination.

Side effects

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-term and not everyone gets them. The very common side effects should only last a day or 2. The Pfizer vaccine tends to cause more side effects after the second dose.

Very common side effects in the first day or 2 include:

- A heaving feeling or soreness where they had the injection
- Feeling achy or like they've got the flu
- Feeling tired
- Having a headache

A mild fever may occur shortly after vaccination and last for a day or 2, however a high temperature could also indicate that they have COVID-19 or another infection.

An uncommon side effect is swollen glands in the armpit or neck on the same side as the arm where they had the vaccine. This can last for around 10 days, but if it lasts longer contact your GP surgery for advice.

If they have any side effects after their vaccine they should rest. You can give them the correct dose of paracetamol for their age (follow the advice in the packaging) to help them feel better.

What to do if you are concerned about your child's symptoms

These symptoms normally last less than a week. If your child's symptoms seem to get worse or if you are concerned you can look at **111.wales.nhs.uk** online, and if necessary call NHS 111 Wales on **111** or your GP surgery. If 111 is not available in your area, call **0845 46 47**. Calls to 111 are free from landlines and mobiles. Calls to 0845 46 47 cost 2p per minute plus your telephone provider's usual access charge.

If you do seek advice from a doctor or a nurse, make sure you tell them about your child's vaccination (show them the vaccination card) so they can assess them properly.

You can report any side effects online at: **coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk** or via the Yellow Card app.

Are there more serious side effects?

There has been a small number of reports for myocarditis and pericarditis (inflammation of the heart) in individuals under 18 years both in the UK and internationally. Most of these people recovered quickly and felt better following rest and simple treatments.

You should seek medical advice urgently if your child experiences:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart

How COVID-19 is spread

COVID-19 is spread through droplets breathed out from the nose or mouth, particularly when speaking or coughing. It can also be picked up by touching your eyes, nose and mouth after contact with contaminated objects and surfaces.

Can your child catch COVID-19 from the vaccine?

Your child cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine but it is possible to have caught COVID-19 and not realise that they have the symptoms until after their vaccination appointment. The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- A new continuous cough
- A high temperature
- A loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

Although a mild fever can occur within a day or 2 of vaccination, if your child has any other COVID-19 symptoms or their fever lasts longer, stay at home and arrange to have a test by phoning **119** (calls are free) or online at: **gov.wales/get-tested-coronavirus-covid-19**

What to do next

After your child has had their first dose they will given a second appointment. Their vaccine record card will show the details of the first dose. Keep their vaccine record card safe and make sure you keep their next appointment for them to have their second dose.

Keep your child's record card safe and remember to take it to their next appointment.

If your child is not well for their appointment

If your child is unwell, it is better to wait until they have recovered to have their vaccination. Your child should not attend a vaccine appointment if they are self-isolating, or waiting for a COVID-19 test or result.

If your child is in a group that is at greater risk of serious illness from COVID-19 you should wait 4 weeks after COVID-19 infection before getting their vaccine.

For all other children you should wait at least 12 weeks before getting their vaccine.

During periods of high incidence or where there is a concern about vaccine effectiveness (e.g. a new variant) this may be reduced to 8 weeks.

Will the vaccine protect your child?

The COVID-19 vaccine that your child has had has been shown to reduce the chance of them suffering from COVID-19 disease.

Millions of doses of the vaccine have been given worldwide. The vaccine is highly effective in children and young people.

It may take a few weeks for your child's body to build up some protection from the vaccine. Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective, so you should continue to take recommended precautions to avoid your child picking up the infection.

Some children may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

What your child can do after they've had the vaccine

The vaccine cannot give your child COVID-19 infection, and it will reduce their chance of becoming ill.

It is still important to continue to follow current national guidance. Your child can continue going to school after they have had the vaccine.

To protect yourself and your family, friends and colleagues, you should still:

- think about social distancing
- wear a face mask where advised
- wash your hands carefully and frequently
- open windows to let fresh air in
- follow the current guidance at **gov.wales/coronavirus**.

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Vaccination saves lives

More information

You can find out more information about COVID-19 vaccines, including their contents and possible side effects at: coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/productinformation

You can report suspected side effects online at: coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

To find out how the NHS uses your information, visit: 111.wales.nhs.uk/AboutUs/Yourinformation

For other formats of this leaflet visit: phw.nhs.wales/covid-19-vaccination