



Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19 Vaccination for Children and Adolescents



1 Why should children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years receive COVID-19 vaccine?

In the early stage of the COVID-19 epidemic, the infection rate among children was relatively low. However, with the global pandemic of COVID-19 infection, overseas data show that the infection rate of children and adolescents is constantly rising. Under the spreading threat posed by mutant virus strains, children and adolescents who are yet to receive vaccination should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection. Vaccination is crucial to protect children and adolescents against COVID-19 disease to effectively decrease the rates of serious illness and death. Vaccination enables children and adolescents to resume normal school and daily life as soon as possible.

According to the recommendation of the Joint Scientific Committees joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel (JSC-EAP), children and adolescents aged 5-17 years could choose to receive either BioNTech(Comirnaty) vaccine or Sinovac(CoronaVac) vaccine. Children aged 3 to 4 years can receive Sinovac vaccine.



2 How many doses of COVID-19 vaccination do children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years need?

Hong Kong currently provides two types of COVID-19 vaccines, primary immunisation as two doses:

Sinovac vaccine: For children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years. Two doses at 28 days interval.

BioNTech vaccine: For children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 years. Two doses at 56 days interval.

Emerging data suggest that two doses of BioNTech vaccine with a longer interval would result in better immune response, and the risk of myocarditis and/or pericarditis would be lowered.

In view of the worsening situation of COVID-19 in Hong Kong and overseas practice, JSC-EAP recommended to shorten the time interval between the first two doses of BioNTech vaccine from 12 weeks to 8 weeks for children and adolescents aged 5-17 years.

For adolescents with special needs (e.g. study abroad) who choose to advance the second dose of BioNTech vaccine to after 21 days from their first dose, they need to bring along a signed parent/guardian consent form, and must be accompanied by their parent or guardian in person to the vaccination venue on the day of vaccination by walk-in.

Children and adolescents are recommended by experts to receive BioNTech vaccine intramuscularly at anterolateral aspect of mid-thigh, although their preference for an injection at upper arm would be respected. They can wear loose-fitting, easy to roll-up or other suitable clothing for ease of vaccination.

3 What are the indications and arrangements for 3rd / additional dose in children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years?

Currently, a 3rd dose is recommended for **immunocompromised[^]** children and adolescents aged **3 to 17 years**.

A 3rd dose is also recommended for **all adolescents aged 12 to 17 years**, effective from **11 March 2022 onwards**. A 3rd dose is not recommended for children below 12 years except for immunocompromised ones[^].

A **4th dose** in **immunocompromised[^]** adolescents aged 12 to 17 years old is strongly recommended, effective from **21 March 2022 onwards**. A 4th dose is not yet recommended for children aged below 12 years.

Immunocompromised persons below age 18 years have to bring the signed parent/ guardian consent form and the doctor's letter, and be accompanied by their parent or guardian in person to the vaccination venue on the day of vaccination.

[^] For details of the specific groups of immunocompromised patients, please refer to thematic website FAQ 34 (<https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/faq>).

For Sinovac vaccine as primary series:

Age group	1 st dose Interval	2 nd dose Interval	3 rd dose Interval	4 th dose Interval
3-11 years old	28 days	For immunocompromised persons only: 28 days Can choose Sinovac or BioNTech*		N.A.
12-17 years old	28 days	90 days Can choose Sinovac or BioNTech (28 days if immunocompromised - Recommend BioNTech and personal preference for Sinovac is respected)		for immunocompromised persons only: 90 days Can choose Sinovac or BioNTech

*BioNTech for 5 years or above

For BioNTech vaccine as primary series:

Age group	1 st dose Interval	2 nd dose Interval	3 rd dose Interval	4 th dose Interval
5-11 years old	56 days	For immunocompromised persons only: 28 days Can choose BioNTech or Sinovac		N.A.
12-17 years old	56 days	150 days Recommend BioNTech and personal preference for Sinovac is respected (28 days if immunocompromised - Recommend BioNTech and personal preference for Sinovac is respected)		for immunocompromised persons only: 90 days Can choose BioNTech or Sinovac

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Please refer <https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/> for the most updated information

4 Is there any difference in the ingredients and dosage of COVID-19 vaccine for children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years and adults?

Sinovac vaccine:

There is no difference in the ingredient and dosage for children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years and adults.

BioNTech vaccine:

There is no difference in the ingredient and dosage for children and adolescents aged 12 to 17 years and that for adults.

The dosage for children aged 5 to 11 years is one-third of a dose for adults, but the ingredient is the same as that for adults.



6 What are the possible side effects of COVID-19 vaccine for children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years?

Sinovac vaccine:

Most side effects for those aged 3 to 17 years are mild. The most common reaction after Sinovac vaccination is injection site pain.

Other common side effects	Injection site induration and swelling, fever, abnormal skin and mucous membrane, decreased appetite, nausea, headache, cough, fatigue, rhinorrhea and oropharyngeal pain
Uncommon side effects	Injection site pruritus and erythema, hypersensitivity, diarrhoea, vomiting, myalgia, laryngeal pain, pharyngeal erythema, upper respiratory tract infection, abdominal pain, upper abdominal pain, abdominal distention, dizziness, lymphadenitis, chest discomfort and blepharitis

BioNTech vaccine:

The overall safety profile of BioNTech in adolescents 12 to 15 years of age is similar to that in those 16 years old or above.

Very common side effects	Injection site pain and swelling, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, diarrhoea, fever (Some of these side effects were slightly more frequent in adolescents 12 to 15 years than in adults)
Common side effects	Injection site redness, nausea and vomiting
Uncommon adverse effects	Enlarged lymph nodes, feeling unwell, arm pain, insomnia, injection site itching, allergic reactions (e.g. rash, itching), feeling weak or lack of energy/sleepy, decreased appetite, excessive sweating and night sweats

Myocarditis and pericarditis are known adverse reactions of BioNTech, and the majority of cases occur after the second dose in adolescents. Adolescents should avoid strenuous exercise for one week after BioNTech vaccination.

5 Is COVID-19 vaccine safe and effective for children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years?

Phase I and II trials on the use of Sinovac vaccine in children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years showed that Sinovac vaccine is immunogenic, safe and well-tolerated. In addition, ongoing phase III trials also showed that Sinovac vaccine was well-tolerated in this age group.

Available information from mass vaccination campaigns in mainland China among children and adolescents 3 to 17 years old (with over 210 million doses of Sinovac vaccine administered) has not shown major safety issues.

BioNTech vaccine has a high efficacy against symptomatic COVID-19 disease. Vaccination is crucial to protect children and adolescents against symptomatic COVID-19 disease. The JSC-EAP opined that both vaccines are expected to lower the risk of severe disease or death and Comirnaty may provide additional protection against Omicron infection.



7 Can children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years receive COVID-19 vaccination if he / she has received / will receive another vaccine recently?

COVID-19 vaccination should be given at least 14 days apart from any other vaccines such as seasonal influenza vaccine.

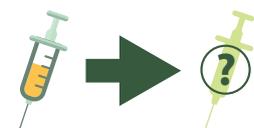
Having said that, there are circumstances when shortening the interval between the administration of COVID-19 vaccination and other vaccines is justified. These include:

- situations when there are increased risk of COVID-19 and other vaccine-preventable diseases;
- when another vaccine is required for post-exposure prophylaxis, such as tetanus and rabies.



8 If the adolescents aged 5 to 17 years have already received one dose of BioNTech vaccine more than 8 weeks ago, do they need to receive the first dose of vaccine again?

Experts consider various risks and benefits and recommend adolescents aged 5 to 17 can now receive two doses of BioNTech, with at least 8 weeks interval between the two doses. If the interval from the first dose of BioNTech has been more than 8 weeks, they should receive the second dose as soon as possible and do not need to repeat the vaccination series. Besides, unless there is a severe allergic response or other severe adverse reactions after the first dose, the vaccine recipients are advised to complete the first two doses with the same product when possible.



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9 Where can children and adolescents at 3 to 17 years old get COVID-19 vaccines?

Sinovac vaccine:

- Arrangement made by school: Please contact the school enrolled for details.
- Designated private doctors or clinics: Students can make an appointment for vaccination of Sinovac vaccine directly with one of more than a thousand private doctors or clinics under the Vaccination Programme. (The list of private doctors/clinics is available at the designated website of the Vaccination Programme www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/VSS).
- Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) or designated General Outpatient Clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority or Student Health Service Centres of the Department of Health: Bookings can be made through the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme website (<https://booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/index.jsp>) directly.
- COVID-19 Mobile Vaccination Station: For details, please refer to the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme website (<https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/programme>). Service location and schedule: https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/List_Mobile_Vaccination_Station_ENG.pdf



BioNTech vaccine:

Adolescents aged 12 to 17 years

- Arrangement made by school: Please contact the school enrolled for details.
- Private healthcare institutions: Please visit https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/list_vssdr_covid_bnt_pilot_eng.pdf for the contact details of enrolled private healthcare institutions for making enquiries and appointment for vaccination direct.
- Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) or designated General Outpatient Clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority: Bookings can be made through the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme website (<https://booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/index.jsp>) directly.
- Hospital COVID-19 Vaccination Stations: Mainly to enable patients visiting the hospital for follow-up appointments and visitors, in particular patients of specialist out-patient clinics, to receive BioNTech vaccination without prior booking when they have their follow-up medical consultation. Please browse the website for details: <https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/programme> (List of Hospital COVID-19 Vaccination Stations: https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/HA_HCVS_Location_ENG.pdf)
- Mobile Vaccination Station: For details, please refer to the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme website (<https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/programme>). Service location and schedule: https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/List_Mobile_Vaccination_Station_ENG.pdf

Children aged 5 to 11 years

- As special dilution procedure is needed for children's dosage of BioNTech vaccine, **Children Community Vaccination Centres** are set up in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and New Territories by the Government for children aged 5 to 11 years to receive BioNTech vaccines.
- Children **cannot** receive vaccine in venue other than Children Community Vaccination Centres
- Bookings at Children Community Vaccination Centres can be made by parents / guardians for the children through the thematic website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).
- Arrangement made by school: Please contact the school enrolled for details.

Persons aged below 18 years should bring along the Consent Form for COVID-19 Vaccination completed by their parents or guardians for COVID-19 Vaccination.

For children aged 11 years or below, an accompanying adult (e.g. adult relative, domestic helper or school teacher if the child receives vaccination via group arrangements by schools) is required to be present physically at the venue on the day of vaccination.

For immunocompromised children and adolescents receiving the third or the fourth dose, an accompanying parent or guardian is required to be present physically at the venue on the day of vaccination. They should also bring the relevant doctor's letter to the vaccination venue.

Children and adolescents need to bring the original identity document to the vaccination venue on the day of vaccination. If the identity document of the child (e.g. birth certificate) does not bear a photo, please remember to bring their latest student's handbook bearing their photograph for verification.



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