



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



1) Why should children and adolescents aged 6 months 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 analysis from the University of Hong Kong, 1,144 children aged 11 years or below who were hospitalized due to COVID-19 infection during the fifth wave of the epidemic, Paediatric Intensive Care Unit admission rate and mortality rate were 1.8% and 0.2% respectively, which are twice or more as high compared to seasonal influenza.

According to the recommendation of the Joint Scientific Committees joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel (JSC-EAP), children and adolescents aged 6 months to 17 years could choose to receive either age-appropriate BioNTech (Comirnaty) vaccine or Sinovac (CoronaVac) vaccine.

2) What type of COVID-19 vaccines are available in Hong Kong under the Government Vaccination Programme?

Vaccines	Platform	Dosage	Eligible Group
CoronaVac vaccine	Inactivated	CoronaVac 0.5 millilitre/dose	Aged 6 months or above
Comirnaty Adult formulation	mRNA	Comirnaty Original 30 micrograms/dose	Adults and adolescents aged 12 years or above
Comirnaty Paediatric formulation	mRNA	Comirnaty Original 10 micrograms/dose	Children aged 5 to 11 years
Comirnaty Toddler formulation	mRNA	Comirnaty Original 3 micrograms/dose	Toddlers aged 6 months to less than 5 years
Comirnaty Bivalent vaccine	mRNA	Comirnaty Original / Omicron BA.4-5 (15/15 micrograms)/dose	Eligible persons aged 12 years or above

3) How many doses of COVID-19 vaccination do children and adolescents aged 6 months to 17 years need for initial doses?

Initial doses 組別 Group	如選擇克爾來福 (科興) 疫苗 For CoronaVac (Sinovac) vaccine		如選擇復必泰 (BioNTech) 疫苗 For Comirnaty (BioNTech) vaccine	
	第一劑至第二劑 (1 st to 2 nd dose):	第二劑至第三劑 (2 nd to 3 rd dose):	第一劑至第二劑 (1 st to 2 nd dose):	第二劑至第三劑 (2 nd to 3 rd dose):
6 個月 - 4 歲 6 months - 4 years old	28 日/days	90 日/days	56 日/days	90 日/days
5 - 17 歲 /years old			56 日/days	150 日/days
免疫力弱 Immunocompromised	28 日/days	28 日/days	28 日/days	28 日/days

- For immunocompromised children and adolescent aged below 18 years, they may follow the recommended schedule for immunocompromised persons.
- It is advised to complete the first two doses with the same product when possible. For those who developed severe side effects after the initial dose and would need to receive another brand for the second dose, please obtain relevant doctor's certification letter (including the reasons to receive another brand for second dose) from your attending doctor or family doctor and attend the vaccination venue. Health care professionals will arrange the vaccination based on individual circumstances.
- After completion of the first two doses, those are recommended to receive additional dose(s) may choose to receive the same brand or another brand of vaccine. The interval between third dose and second dose should be given at the recommended interval of the brand of vaccine chosen for 1st and 2nd dose. For example, for persons who have received Sinovac vaccine for the first two doses, the 3rd dose of Sinovac or BioNTech vaccine should be given at an interval of 90 days after the 2nd dose.
- 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 situation of COVID-19 in Hong Kong and overseas practice, JSC-EAP recommended first two doses of BioNTech vaccine at 8 weeks (i.e. 56 days) interval for uninfected children and adolescents aged 6 months to 17 years.
- For children and adolescents with personal needs who can choose to advance the second dose of BioNTech vaccine to after 21 days from their first dose under informed consent after consideration of individual risk and benefit. 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 (not applicable to infants) would be respected. Children and adolescents are recommended to receive Sinovac vaccine intramuscularly at upper arm, and healthcare professionals will arrange the vaccination for infants at thigh when

necessary. They can wear loose-fitting, easy to roll-up or other suitable clothing for ease of vaccination.

- Immunocompromised persons below 18 years old 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 the thematic website FAQ 28 (https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106953.html#FAQ_C28).
- For eligible children between 6 months and 11 years old who cannot make online bookings (e.g. children who are not holding Hong Kong Identity Card or Hong Kong Birth Certificate, recovered children, children who received COVID-19 vaccine outside Hong Kong, etc.), they can bring along the completed consent forms and be accompanied by an adult to go to the vaccination venues (except for those required prior booking) at the recommended vaccination interval according to experts' advice. Staff at vaccination venues will reserve small amount of daily quota for their vaccination. As the arrangement on vaccination venues is subject to change, please check the COVID-19 webpage at <https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106952.html> before you make a visit.

4) Who can receive additional booster in 2023?

Under the Government Programme, immunocompromised children and adolescent who have completed initial doses may receive an additional booster free of charge in 2023, 180 days after last dose received or recovery from COVID-19 infection (whichever is later).

An additional booster in 2023 may be considered at least 180 days after the last dose or recovery from COVID-19 infection (whichever is later) for children and adolescent aged 6 months to 17 years with comorbidities based on personal choice as recommended by experts if they have completed the initial doses. Apart from CoronaVac or Comirnaty vaccine, there are other COVID-19 vaccines registered under Cap. 138A in Hong Kong. Citizens may consult a family doctor on the supply of registered COVID-19 vaccine in private market and consider receiving the vaccination for personal protection outside the Government Vaccination Programme **at their own expenses**.

5) Is there any difference in the ingredients and dosage of COVID-19 vaccine for children and adolescents aged 6 months to 17 years and adults?

Sinovac vaccine: There is no difference in the ingredient and dosage for children and adolescents aged 6 months to 17 years and adults.

BioNTech vaccine:

12-17 years old:

There is no difference in the ingredient and dosage for children and adolescents aged 12

to 17 years and that for adults (i.e. for ancestral strain vaccine, 30 micrograms (mcg) per dose; for bivalent vaccine, 15 micrograms mRNA encoding Original viral spike protein and 15 micrograms mRNA encoding Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 per dose)

5-11 years old:

The dosage for children aged 5 to 11 years is 10 micrograms (mcg) per dose. The active ingredient is the same as the ancestral strain vaccines given to adults. Subject to the vaccine availability, vaccination venues will provide a dose of 10 mcg paediatric formulation of BioNTech vaccine or a fractional dose of the adult BioNTech vaccine (one-third of an adult dose). Children who are given a fractional dose of the adult BioNTech vaccine may complete their vaccination series with the paediatric formulation.

For the first dose, children should receive the recommended age-appropriate vaccine and dosage based on their age on the day of the vaccination. If children received a 10 mcg dose of BioNTech vaccine as the 1st / 2nd dose and then turned 12 years old (but not yet reached 13 years old) by the time of the 2nd / 3rd dose, can choose to receive a 10 mcg dose of BioNTech vaccine or an adult dose for the 2nd / 3rd dose for their children.

If they have reached 13 years old already and choose BioNTech vaccine for the 2nd / 3rd dose, an adult dose of BioNTech vaccine should be given. Please also note question 8 for the venues information for 10 mcg dose and adult dose. If you cannot arrange booking for a 10 mcg dose, please visit the Children Community Vaccination Centre by walk-in.

The allowed vaccination arrangement for children transition from 11 to 12 years old is appended below:

Transition (11-12-12yo)	1st Dose (11 years old)	Interval	2nd Dose (12 years old)	Interval	3rd Dose (12 years old)
Scenario A	10 mcg	56 days	10 mcg	150 days	10 mcg
Scenario B	10 mcg	56 days	10 mcg	150 days	30 mcg
Scenario C	10 mcg	56 days	30 mcg	150 days	30 mcg

Transition (11-11-12yo)	1st Dose (11 years old)	Interval	2nd Dose (11 years old)	Interval	3rd Dose (12 years old)
Scenario D	10 mcg	56 days	10 mcg	150 days	10 mcg
Scenario E	10 mcg	56 days	10 mcg	150 days	30 mcg

6 months to 4 years old:

The dosage for toddler aged 6 months to 4 years old is 3 micrograms (mcg) per dose (toddler formulation). The active ingredient is the same as the ancestral strain vaccines given to adults.

For the first dose, toddler should receive the recommended age-appropriate vaccine and dosage based on their age on the day of vaccination. If toddler received a 3 mcg dose of BioNTech vaccine as the 1st / 2nd dose and then turned 5 years old (but not yet reached 6 years old) by the time of the 2nd / 3rd dose, they can choose to receive same dosage (a 3 mcg dose) for their 2nd / 3rd dose. If they choose to receive one dose of 10mcg BioNTech vaccine after reaching 5 years old as second dose, an additional dose of 10mcg BioNTech is recommended (as third dose).

If you cannot arrange booking for a 3 mcg dose, please visit the Children Community Vaccination Centre by walk-in.

The allowed vaccination arrangement for children transition from 4 to 5 years old is appended below:

Transition (4-5-5yo)	1st Dose (4 years old)	Interval	2nd Dose (5 years old)	Interval	3rd Dose (5 years old)
Scenario A	3 mcg	56 days	3 mcg	90 days	3 mcg
Scenario B	3 mcg	56 days	3 mcg	90 days	10 mcg
Scenario C	3 mcg	56 days	10 mcg	150 days	10 mcg

Transition (4-4-5yo)	1st Dose (4 years old)	Interval	2nd Dose (4 years old)	Interval	3rd Dose (5 years old)
Scenario D	3 mcg	56 days	3 mcg	90 days	3 mcg
Scenario E	3 mcg	56 days	3 mcg	90 days	10 mcg

6) Is COVID-19 vaccine safe and effective for children and adolescents aged 6 months to 17 years?

Experts opined that both vaccines are highly effective to lower the risk of severe disease or death.

BioNTech vaccine has been assessed by experts and considered safe and effective.

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. In addition, the early clinical trial data from two doses of Sinovac vaccine in children down to six months of age showed that the vaccine was immunogenic and had no new safety concerns.

In order to prevent outbreaks in schools, vaccinated children and adolescents should continue to observe personal hygiene and various infection control measures after returning to schools.

7) What are the possible side effects of COVID-19 vaccine for children and adolescents aged 6 months 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 children and adolescents 6 months to 15 years of age is similar to that in those 16 years old or above.

Very common side effects	Irritability (6 months to < 2 years), Injection site pain and swelling; tiredness, headache, drowsiness (6 months to <2 years), 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 ('very common' for 6 months to 11 years), nausea and vomiting
Uncommon adverse effects	Enlarged lymph nodes (more frequently observed after the booster dose), feeling unwell, arm pain, insomnia, injection site itching, allergic reactions (e.g. rash ('common' for 6 months to < 2 years), itching), feeling weak or lack of energy/sleepy, decreased appetite ('very common' for 6 months to < 2 years), excessive sweating, night sweats and dizziness

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

For detailed side effects, please refer to the vaccination factsheet.

8) Can children and adolescents aged 6 months to 17 years receive COVID-19 vaccination if he / she has received / will receive another vaccine recently?

COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered with, or at any time before or after, any other vaccines including live attenuated vaccines under informed consent. If clients / parents of

children wish to space out COVID-19 vaccine with live attenuated vaccines (e.g. Measles, Mumps, Rubella & Varicella (MMRV) Vaccine; Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV)), an interval of 14 days is sufficient.

9) For children and adolescents who acquired COVID-19 infection before, how many doses of COVID-19 vaccine should they receive after recovery?

Recovered persons should take one dose less than uninfected persons. Recovery is defined as 14 days after the date of first documented positive test (nucleic acid test or rapid antigen test). The recovered persons should receive the remaining doses according to the interval for the next dose. The actual number of doses given would be marked as the dose sequence in the vaccination record. For detailed recommendation, please refer to “Factsheet on COVID-19 Vaccination for Persons with Prior COVID-19 Infection”:

https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/factsheet_priorcovid19infection_eng.pdf

COVID-19 vaccination should be offered to persons who are unsure if they had a previous COVID-19 infection or persons who do not have their recovery record in the Department of Health's system as if they have not been infected. COVID-19 vaccine is safe in persons with evidence of previous SARS-CoV-2 infection, and prior COVID-19 screening before administration of COVID-19 vaccine is not required.

10) Where can children and adolescents at 6 months to 17 years old get COVID-19 vaccines and what documents to bring?

For latest vaccination arrangement and venues, please refer to the COVID-19 webpage at <https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106952.html>.

Documents to bring:

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

For children aged 3 to 11 years, 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. If the identity document of the children (e.g. birth certificate) does not bear a photo, please remember to bring their latest student's handbook bearing their photograph for verification. Should the identity document of the child does not bear a photo and the child does not have student's handbook or other identity document with photo, discretion will be exercised to verify the identity of the child by other means in light of the circumstances.

For children aged below 3 years, parents are required to present the original copy of the identity document (e.g. birth certificate) of the child and bring along a consent form signed by the parents on the date of vaccination of the children. The children should be accompanied by their parents/guardians in person when receiving vaccination. If the

vaccination is arranged by the school / centre in group, the accompanying teacher or staff should bring the aforementioned required documents and be responsible in clearly indicating the identity of each child.

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.

11) For children and adolescents who got COVID-19 vaccines outside Hong Kong which were not Sinovac or BioNTech, what should they do?

For those eligible public who received COVID-19 vaccine outside Hong Kong, please bring along with your identity document, proof of your previous dose vaccination record (with date, venue of vaccination and type of vaccine) issued outside Hong Kong on the vaccination day. If they cannot make an appointment for the next dose with correct dose sequence of the vaccine through the online system, they may directly go to the vaccination venues for vaccination. Vaccination may be provided by staff after clarification and consideration of relevant details, including those of the previous dose vaccination. For details, please refer to FAQ 24 and 31 (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106953.html>)

12) How can I use the electronic ways to access the vaccination record?

A paper vaccination record will be provided to the children and adolescents after receiving vaccine. For accessing the electronic version of the COVID-19 vaccination record, parents or guardians could use the Electronic Vaccination and Testing Record System (<https://www.evt.gov.hk>) to download the electronic vaccination record; alternatively, they could register the Electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHealth) online (<http://apps.ehealth.gov.hk>). Please refer to website (<http://www.ehealth.gov.hk>) or contact eHealth Registration Office at 3467 6300 for more details.

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Please refer <https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106934.html> for the most updated information



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