

Adolescent COVID-19 vaccination in the Canton of Vaud with Pfizer-BioNTech's Comirnaty® and Moderna's Spikevax® vaccines

On 4th June 2021, the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products Swissmedic has approved the extension of indication for the Comirnaty® vaccine to adolescents aged 12 to 15 years. On 9th August 2021, the Spikevax® vaccine was also accepted for this age category.

According to the updated Federal Office of Public Health and Federal Commission for vaccinations's recommendations on 26th August 2021, the Comirnaty® and Spikevax® vaccines are endorsed for all young people aged 12 to 15 who wish to be vaccinated, after an individual analysis of the benefits and risks of vaccination, in discussion with their parents or any other trusted person prior to the vaccination appointment.

The federal government covers the costs of this vaccination.

The vaccination may be administered after oral consent has been obtained from the adolescent and a parent or person with parental authority. For those presenting themselves alone at the vaccination center or youngsters who disagree with their parents, an assessment enabling to establish the capacity to consent will be completed.

I am a teenager aged between 12 and 15. What benefits can I expect from the COVID-19 vaccination ?

Comirnaty® and Spikevax® anti COVID-19 vaccines help protect you against COVID-19 infection, with clinical studies revealing between 93 and 100% efficacy. They offer you direct protection against the mild, frequent and the very rare severe courses. Vaccination also allows you to avoid the negative consequences of indirect individual and collective measures (e.g. isolation or quarantine), as well as the consequences of frequent exposure to the virus (e.g. at school or during leisure activities).

A greater benefit is expected if you:

- a) are severely affected by a chronic disease, preventing further illness/infection if possible.
- b) are in close contact or live under the same roof as vulnerable people, especially immunodeficient and immunocompromised people.
- c) live in a community setting with an increased risk of infection and outbreaks

You are advised to discuss your risk/benefit balance with your GP before making an appointment for the vaccination.

For which reasons may I not receive the COVID-19 vaccination ?

The only absolute contraindication to vaccination is an allergy to the components of the vaccine. It is therefore important that you inform your GP or the vaccination center staff of any allergies you may have. It is also not possible for you to be vaccinated in the acute phase of an illness (e.g. presence of fever). Furthermore, if you have symptoms compatible with a COVID-19 disease, you should first confirm that you are not facing this disease before you get vaccinated.

How is the vaccination carried out ?

As with adults, if you did not have the COVID-19 disease, you will receive 2 intramuscular injections, 4-6 weeks apart. If you had a COVID-19 infection, you will normally only receive one dose of vaccine, usually 3 months after the infection.

To avoid fainting and fainting-related injuries, you should remain seated or lying down during vaccination and observed for 15 or 30 minutes in a waiting room after the vaccine is given.

Is vaccination against COVID-19 safe for me ?

Yes, vaccination against COVID-19 provides safe and effective protection against COVID-19. In clinical studies for adolescents as young as 12 years of age, no safety concerns were identified with Pfizer-BioNTech's Comirnaty® or Moderna's Spikevax® vaccine.

Post-marketing **allergic reactions have been observed on rare occasions** and usually occur immediately after vaccination but can be easily treated. Specific precautionary measures should be taken for persons who have had severe allergic reactions in the past.

There have also been rare cases of **myocarditis or pericarditis** (inflammation of the heart or its envelope) in connection with vaccination. This usually occurs within a week of vaccination and manifests as chest pain, palpitations, or shortness of breath. Most cases have a positive outcome but require hospital treatment.

Apart from allergic reactions and episodes of myocarditis, there have been no other significant reports of serious side effects in studies or in people vaccinated since the vaccines were approved. The experts are keeping a close eye on possible indicators.

What are the vaccine's common side effects ?

You are likely to develop minor side effects, which are a sign that the body is developing protection against the disease.

These side effects may affect your ability to carry out your daily activities, but they should disappear within a few days. They may be more severe after the second dose. Some people have no side effects at all. Possible side effects include:

In the arm where the injection took place :

Pain (approx.. 80%)
Redness (approx. 5%)
Swelling (approx. 5%)

In the rest of the body :

Fever (approx. 10-20%)
Fatigue (approx. 60%)
Muscle pain (approx. 30%)
Shivers (approx. 30-40%)
Headache (approx. 55-65%)

We advise you to contact your GP if :

- The redness or tenderness at the injection site gets worse after 24 hours.
- If side effects are worrying or do not seem to go away after a few days, especially if you have **chest pain, palpitation or shortness of breath.**

If you wish to find out more :

Coronavirus : frequently asked questions (FOPH website) : [lien](#)

FOPH factsheet – vaccination from the age of 12 : [lien](#)