



Cross Specialty Paediatric advice on COVID-19 vaccination for children aged 5 years+

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Paediatric specialists support COVID-19 vaccination for children.

The National Clinical Programme for Paediatrics and Neonatology welcomes NIAC's advice for universal COVID-19 vaccination of children aged 5+. We strongly urge all parents to consider availing of vaccination for their children. The benefits of vaccination are clearly laid out in the NIAC guidance:

<https://rcpi-live-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NIAC-Recommendations-on-COVID-19-vaccination-for-children-aged-5-to-11-years.pdf>

Children with medical vulnerability:

Following cross- specialty paediatric consultation, the following groups are strongly urged to avail of **early vaccination** as data to date suggests these are the children who will benefit most from vaccination.

1. Severe neurological disability^{6,9} (this was the most prevalent underlying condition amongst children who have been hospitalised due to COVID-19)
2. Children with complex medical need e.g. those dependent on technological support such as tracheostomy
3. Children with inborn errors of immunity/immunodeficiency (in particular APECED and interferon pathway defects) and children with acquired or treatment-related immunodeficiency (e.g. children peri- or post haematopoietic stem cell or organ transplant, children who are HIV positive, and children on immunosuppressive medications)
4. Down syndrome has been identified as a risk factor for severe disease^{7 8}
5. Complex medical conditions where a child is likely to have significant morbidity with any infection, including even mild/moderate COVID-19 symptoms
6. Obesity is a significant risk factor among adults. Children and adolescents with severe obesity should be encouraged to avail of early vaccination

Children without medical conditions:

While the individual risk for children without medical conditions is low, severe disease and death have occurred rarely in children who were previously well.⁹ For this reason we **urge that all children within the recommended age groups avail of the vaccine.**

The benefit-risk profile of vaccination of healthy children is laid out in the NIAC guidance.¹⁰

COVID-19 vaccination provides direct benefits to children. The medical risk of COVID-19 infection to children is minimised by vaccination. The risk and implications of requiring repeated periods of isolation and restrictions – educational and social, will be reduced through vaccination. There are also societal benefits of vaccination that will benefit children both directly and indirectly. We do not, to date, know of any long-term side effects from this vaccination.

Alongside vaccination, it is essential that families also continue to follow latest public health and HPSC advice as on <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/newupdatedguidance/>



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11. Health Protection Surveillance Centre <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/newupdatedguidance/>

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