



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta
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COVID-19 Vaccination in children aged 6 months – 4 years

Dear Doctor,

In line with NIAC guidance, the HSE is now commencing COVID-19 vaccination for children aged 6 months to 4 years. Comirnaty 3 micrograms/dose is currently the only vaccine approved and licensed by the EMA for this age group. Administration of the adult formulation at a reduced dose is not licensed and must not be given to children aged 6 months – 4 years.

COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for those with underlying conditions that place them at higher risk of severe COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccination is also being offered to all others in this age group.

The recommended vaccine schedule is three doses with an interval of 3 weeks between dose one and two and at least 8 weeks between dose two and three.

The NIAC Immunisation Guidelines Chapter 5a is available at the RCPI website:

<https://www.rcpi.ie/Healthcare-Leadership/NIAC/Immunisation-Guidelines-for-Ireland>

The roll out of vaccines to children aged 6 months-4 years will be in line with existing processes for children aged 5-11 years, so they will only receive their COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination centre. Appointments will be available commencing 20th February 2023. Children in this age group cannot be vaccinated in general practice or at a pharmacy.

NIAC advise that priority should be given to the routine childhood immunisation schedule. Until there is more evidence it is prudent to separate COVID-19 vaccination in children aged 6 months-4 years from other vaccines for a period of 14 days.

For more information, please see HSE guidance at the following link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/infomaterials/newsletter/bulletin-59.pdf>

The National Immunisation Office (NIO) is the primary source of clinical guidelines about national immunisation programmes, including COVID-19. Please refer to its website regularly, as the NIO monitor and update information in relation to vaccinations. Please see:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/clinicalguidance.pdf>



General practitioners are an important trusted source of advice for patients, including the parents or guardians of children within this age group who may be unsure as to whether to avail of this vaccine or not. As noted by the CMO, the decision for parents or guardians requires an assessment of a number of factors, including the best interests of the health and wellbeing of their child in the context of their family circumstances. Further information and resources can be accessed through the National Immunisation Office and on the HSE website:

Frequently asked questions:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/faqscovidvacc/covid19faqhcps.html>

Information for parents and guardians:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/covid-19-resources-and-translations/covid-19-vaccine-materials/important-information-for-parents-and-guardians-on-the-pfizer-vaccine-for-6-months-to-4-year-olds.pdf>

I would like once again to express the sincere gratitude of the HSE to General Practitioners and their teams for their significant contribution to date and continued support in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Geraldine Crowley,
Assistant National Director,
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contract**