

School Immunizations during COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Should my child get immunized during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes. It's important you continue with your child's routine immunizations to protect them from other diseases. Immunization is a very effective way to prevent certain diseases. Getting your child immunized is a very effective way to lower the risk of more cases or outbreaks of diseases that can be prevented with vaccines. Public Health immunization programs are an essential service and remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Will school immunizations be offered in school this year?

Yes, school immunizations for the 2020 to 2021 school year will be offered in school to students in grades 6 and 9. Any grade 1 students who still need their routine childhood immunizations will also be included.

Any immunizations for students in grades 6 and 9 in the 2019 to 2020 school year that weren't completed will be offered in school or at your Public Health Office. The signed consent on file from parents and guardians will be used. This includes those students who had their immunizations delayed for other reasons.

Can my child get influenza vaccine in school?

No, but it's important for your child to get their influenza immunization. Influenza and COVID-19 are both respiratory infections. They can be very serious especially for seniors and people with chronic health conditions. Because the symptoms of influenza may also be symptoms of COVID-19, getting immunized for influenza will lower the chance that your child will need to isolate and be tested for COVID-19. You and your child can be immunized for influenza starting on October 19. It's important to protect yourself and others during influenza season which starts late fall and lasts through the winter. Visit ahs.ca/influenza for information about where you and your child can get the influenza immunization.

What's being done to protect students and school staff from COVID-19 during school immunization clinics?

The following measures are being taken to protect your child, school staff, and healthcare workers from COVID-19:

- students are screened every day by parents or guardians for illness and exposure to COVID-19 before going to school using the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment for Albertans](#)
- healthcare workers are screened every day for illness and exposure to COVID-19
- students who have symptoms while at school are sent home
- the immunization clinic space in the school is set up to maintain physical distance
- increased and thorough cleaning of the clinic space
- personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks or eye protection are used
- students wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when they arrive at the clinic area for their immunization and again when they see the nurse

Does my child need to wear a mask when they get their school immunizations?

No. Your child may not need to wear a mask to get immunized in school. Please follow your school's policy for mask use.

My child has symptoms of COVID-19, can they still get immunized?

Children who have symptoms won't be immunized. If your child has symptoms of COVID-19 they should stay home and away from others (isolate). Use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment for Albertans](#) tool to book a COVID-19 test and get further instructions. Your child should **not** go to school if they have symptoms, or if they're legally required to isolate. If your child develops symptoms while at school, or when they arrive for immunization, they'll be sent home by the school. They can get immunized when they're feeling well again.

My child had a vaccine and now has COVID-19 like symptoms. What do I do?

After getting immunized some people can have side effects such as fever, headache, cough, runny nose, or sore throat. Side effects for most vaccines start within 24 hours after getting the vaccine. For vaccines that protect against Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Varicella, side effects can start 5 to 12 days after the immunization. Side effects tend to be mild and could last 24 to 48 hours.

The side effects to immunizations can be similar to symptoms of COVID-19. If your child has side effects that are the same as [COVID-19 symptoms](#) they must stay home and away from others (isolate) even if you think the symptoms are from the vaccine.

- If the side effects go away within 48 hours, your child doesn't have to continue to isolate and can return to school and other normal activities. However, if your child has been told to isolate for other reasons, then they must continue to do so.
- If the side effects last longer than 48 hours, your child must continue to stay home. Contact Health Link at 811 or complete the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment for Albertans](#) to make an appointment for the COVID-19 test. If your child doesn't get tested for COVID-19, they must stay at home for 10 days from the start of their symptoms or until they no longer have symptoms, whichever is longer.

My child wasn't at school on the day of school immunizations. How will they get their school immunizations?

Alberta Health Services (AHS) Public Health will immunize your child the next time they visit the school. They'll use the signed consent you provided. It may take more than 1 school year for your child to get all the doses of each vaccine. The school nurse will contact you if you need to bring your child to the Public Health office to be immunized.

Parents of children who are learning at home will be contacted by Public Health to let them know where they can get the immunizations that are needed.

Can my child get their school immunizations if their school is on alert or having an outbreak?

If you've been notified that your child's school is on "alert" or having an outbreak, the dates of the school immunizations may need to be changed. Public Health will make sure alternate dates for immunization are booked.