

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON COVID-19 VACCINE FOR ADOLESCENTS AGED 12-17 YEARS OLD**

### **1. WHAT IS COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus called Coronavirus. The symptoms of COVID-19 can be fever, cough, shortness of breath and tiredness. These symptoms can also be due to other viral illnesses like common cold, flu or bronchiolitis in young children. Some children can present with diarrhea and vomiting. Rarely, COVID-19 infection can cause pneumonia and severe breathing problems.

### **2. MY CHILD HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19. WHAT DO I DO NOW?**

Most children will have a mild illness and can be cared for at home. It is important that your child continues to have healthy diet, drink lots of fluids and rest.

You need to isolate your child at home. It's important to keep your child home, and away from other people, until your doctor or nurse says it is safe for them to go back to their normal activities. The virus is spread to other people through respiratory droplets from an infected person (coughing and sneezing) and also by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and then touching the face (e.g., eyes, nose, mouth). Hence please remind your child to cover his/her mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and to wash his/her hands often with soap and water. If there is no sink nearby, your child can use hand sanitizer gel to clean the hand.

### **3. WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR MY CHILD WITH COVID-19?**

Currently there are no specific treatment for COVID-19. Most healthy children who get infected are able to recover at home, and usually get better in 1 to 2 weeks. It usually lasts from 5 to 7 days, but can take up to 14 days.

#### **4. WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE DOCTOR?**

If you are concerned that your child is becoming more unwell or showing any of the following features, seek medical advice by calling 991:

- Drinking less than half the usual amount
- Fussy and not active as usual
- Having trouble breathing or is breathing very fast
- Having tummy pain, vomiting or diarrhea
- Looks unwell and you are concerned

#### **5. IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM?**

Currently in Brunei Darussalam, **only Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is approved for use in adolescents 12 years and older.**

#### **6. IS THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE USED IN ANY OTHER COUNTRIES?**

In addition to Brunei Darussalam, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has also received approval for use by at least 79 other countries including USA, UK, Singapore and Malaysia.

#### **7. IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE FOR CHILDREN?**

Yes, even though COVID-19 vaccines are developed as rapidly as possible, they must go through rigorous testing in clinical trials to prove that they meet internationally agreed benchmarks for safety and effectiveness. Only if they meet these standards can a vaccine receive validation from WHO and national regulatory agencies. Clinical trials have shown COVID-19 vaccines to be remarkably safe and effective for adults and children aged 12 and above. Trials involved tens of thousands of volunteers.

## **8. IS MY CHILD ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE?**

All children aged 12 to 17 years residing in Brunei Darussalam are eligible to receive the vaccine.

## **9. CAN MY CHILD BELOW 12 YEARS OLD RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE?**

There are currently no efficacy or safety data for children below the age of 12 years. Until such data are available, children below 12 years of age will not be offered the vaccine.

## **10. WHY SHOULD MY CHILD GET VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19?**

COVID-19 vaccination can help protect your child from getting COVID-19. Although fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, can get sick from COVID-19, and can spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to others. Getting your child vaccinated helps to protect immediate family members, close friends and relatives.

## **11. DOES MY CHILD NEED PARENTAL CONSENT TO RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE?**

Yes. Children below the age of 18 will require the consent of their parents/guardians before they can receive the vaccine.

## **12. HOW MANY DOSES WILL MY CHILD GET?**

The recommended schedule is two (2) doses, with an interval of 21-28 days between the doses. And it will be given as an injection into the muscle of your child's upper arm.

### 13. CAN MY CHILD JUST TAKE ONE DOSE OF THE VACCINE?

Two doses of the vaccine are required to achieve optimal protection against COVID-19.

### 14. DOES MY CHILD NEED A BOOSTER DOSE?

There is currently no evidence on the need for booster doses of the vaccine after the two-dose schedule is complete in children. The Ministry of Health will closely monitor evolving situation and evidence on COVID-19 vaccination requirements and will update the public from time to time.

### 15. WHO SHOULD NOT GET VACCINATED?

Your child should not get vaccinated if your child:

- **Have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) or an immediate allergic reaction**, even if it was not severe, to any ingredient in the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (such as polyethylene glycol). Your child should not get this vaccine
- Had a severe or immediate allergic reaction **after getting the first dose of a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine**. Your child should not get a second dose of this vaccine

A severe allergic reaction is one that needs to be treated with adrenaline or EpiPen or with medical care.

An immediate allergic reaction means a reaction within 4 hours of exposure, including symptoms such as hives, swelling, or wheezing (respiratory distress).

## 16. WHERE CAN MY CHILD GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

Your child can get the vaccination at the following vaccination centres as below:

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Brunei-Muara: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indoor Stadium, Hassanal Bolkiah National Sport Complex Vaccination Centre</li> <li>▪ UBD COVID-19 Vaccination Centre</li> <li>▪ Jubli Emas Bunut Health Centre</li> <li>▪ Vaccination Centre, MRS Bolkiah</li> </ul> |
| Tutong:       | Seri Kenangan Hall, Pekan Tutong   |
| Belait:       | Learning Development Centre, Suri Seri Begawan Hospital  |
| Temburong:    | Belalong Community Hall, Temburong   |

Your child will be informed the date, time and venue of his/her vaccination appointment from the Ministry of Education.

## 17. WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIDE EFFECTS THAT MY CHILD MAY EXPERIENCE AFTER THE COVID-19 VACCINATION?

The side effects observed in children are similar to that in the adult population, and your child may experience more side effects after the second dose of vaccination. These side effects are usually mild to moderate which should resolve in a few days.

The side effects and how to manage them are as below:

| Side effects                                     | How to Manage  |
|--|--|
| Pain, redness and swelling at the injection site | Paracetamol can be administered for fever and pain as according to their weight. |
| Muscle pain and joint pain                       |  |
| Low-grade fever and chills                       |  |
| Headache   |  |
| Fatigue and tiredness                            | Rest.  |

Bring your child to see a doctor the side effects persist for more than 48 hours (2 days) or get worse.

In rare cases, this vaccine can cause a severe allergic reaction. Signs of a severe allergic reaction include difficulties in breathing, swelling of face, throat, eyes or lips, fast heartbeat, dizziness and weakness, a bad rash all over the body. If your child experiences a severe allergic reaction, seek medical attention immediately. Please call 991 or seek emergency treatment immediately.

### **18. IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE LINKED TO CARDIAC ISSUES?**

There have been a small number of adolescents and young adults who experienced mild cases of myocarditis and pericarditis after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. However, ongoing research shows that people who became infected with COVID-19 have a greater risk of developing this potential side effect than those who receive the vaccine.

Myocarditis is a heart muscle inflammation, while pericarditis is an inflammation of the fibrous sac surrounding the heart.

### **19. CAN MY CHILD ENGAGE IN STRENUOUS ACTIVITIES AFTER THEIR VACCINATION?**

Given the emerging data on the small risk of myocarditis and pericarditis observed after vaccination with mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, the Technical Committee on COVID-19 vaccination recommends that all vaccinated persons, in particular adolescents and younger men, should avoid strenuous physical activity for two weeks after their first and second vaccination doses.

In line with the Technical Committee's recommendation, students should also avoid strenuous physical activity for two weeks after their first and second doses.

During this time, students should seek medical attention promptly if they develop chest pain, shortness of breath or abnormal heartbeats.

While most persons with vaccine-related myocarditis observed locally and internationally have mild symptoms and make an uneventful recovery, it is possible that the condition may be aggravated by factors or strenuous activities that may affect the heart.

Symptoms of myocarditis and pericarditis include chest pain, shortness of breath or abnormal heartbeats. If your child develops any of these symptoms, please bring your child to see doctor immediately.

## **20. IF MY CHILD ALREADY HAD COVID-19 AND RECOVERED, DOES MY CHILD STILL NEED TO GET VACCINATED WITH A COVID-19 VACCINE?**

Yes, your child should be vaccinated regardless of whether he/she already had COVID-19 because:

- Research has not yet shown how long a person is protected from getting COVID-19 again after he/she recovers from COVID-19.
- Vaccination helps protect your child even if he/she already had COVID-19.

Evidence is emerging that people get better protection by being fully vaccinated compared with having had COVID-19.

## **21. CAN MY CHILD GET VACCINATED WHILE HE/SHE CURRENTLY SICK WITH COVID-19?**

No. People with COVID-19 who have symptoms should wait to be vaccinated until they have recovered from their illness (6 weeks after your child first diagnosed) and have completed their quarantine period and/or isolation; those without symptoms should also wait until they finish their quarantine period and/or before getting vaccinated. This guidance also applies to people who get COVID-19 before getting their second dose of vaccine.

People who have had a known COVID-19 exposure should not seek vaccination until their quarantine period has ended to avoid potentially exposing healthcare personnel and others during the vaccination visit. This recommendation also applies to people with a known COVID-19 exposure who have received their first dose but not their second.

## **22. CAN MY CHILD BE VACCINATED IF HE/SHE IS ILL ON THE DAY OF VACCINATION?**

If your child is unwell, kindly wait for the announcement from the Ministry of Health for the rescheduling of missed appointments.

## **23. WILL PARENTS/GUARDIANS BE ALLOWED TO ACCOMPANY THEIR CHILD TO THE VACCINATION CENTRE?**

Only one parent/guardian is allowed to accompany their child to the vaccination centre to avoid congestion and ensure compliance to the Standard Operating Procedure of the vaccination centres.

## **24. MY CHILD HAS NOT REGISTERED WITH Bru-HIMS, DOES MY CHILD NEED TO REGISTER BEFORE GETTING THE VACCINATION?**

Yes. In order to ensure the smooth running of the vaccination process during your child's appointment, it is mandatory that you register your child with Bru-HIMS earlier. You can access the form at the link below. And please bring the completed form to the nearest Health Centre (non-flu designated clinics) for registration.

Download the registration form via the link: <https://bit.ly/3GsHGsw>

### **The designated flu clinics are:**

1. Berakas Health Centre
2. Pengkalan Batu Health Centre



3. Seria Health Centre
4. PAPHMWHB, Gadong Health Centre

## **25. WHAT DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED TO BRING WITH MY CHILD TO THE VACCINATION CENTRE?**

Please bring the following documentation during your child's appointment:

- Completed consent form, health screening form and flu desk screening question form;
- Bru-HIMS Hospital card (BN number); and
- Identity card (IC) or any form of identification.

## **26. MY CHILD HAS MISSED HIS/HER VACCINATION APPOINTMENT. WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

As much as possible, please turn up for your child's appointment to avoid denying someone else an appointment slot and to ensure a smooth vaccination process. If your child had missed his/her appointment, kindly wait for the announcement from the Ministry of Health for the rescheduling of missed appointments.

## **27. WHAT IF I DON'T WANT MY CHILD TO GET VACCINATED?**

While vaccination is not mandatory, we encourage all medically eligible children aged 12 years and above to take up vaccination when this is made available to them. Being vaccinated can significantly reduce the chances of COVID-19 infection for your child and prevent severe illness, if infected. Furthermore, vaccination will also protect your family and the wider community.

## **28. CAN MY CHILD CHOOSE TO TAKE THE VACCINATION LATER ON?**

Students who are not able to get vaccinated during the vaccination program may do so later, and if they are medically eligible to do so at that point in time. While vaccination is not mandatory, we encourage all medically eligible individuals to take

it up when offered to them. The risk of community spread remains and comprehensive coverage of COVID-19 vaccination can help protect individuals as well as the wider community against the virus.

### **29. I HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE COVID-19 VACCINATION, CAN I TAKE THE VACCINATION TOGETHER WITH MY CHILD?**

Yes. However, it is best that you get your COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible. Getting yourself vaccinated early can help protect your immediate family members, close friends, relative and wider community.

### **30. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER VACCINATION?**

Until a significant proportion of the population is vaccinated we will need to continue to practice public health measures, such as wearing a mask, good hand hygiene, avoiding public areas when unwell, and QR scanning into premises using the BruHealth app so that we can continue to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

### **REFERENCES:**

- United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)
- World Health Organization: [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)
- NHS Birmingham and Solihull CCG Parent Information Sheet: [www.birminghamand-solihullccg.nhs.uk](http://www.birminghamand-solihullccg.nhs.uk)
- World Health Organization: Interim recommendations for use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, BNT162b2, under Emergency Use Listing. Interim guidance. Updated 15 June 2021.
- UNICEF: [www. https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19](http://www.https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19)