

November 16, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: COVID-19 Vaccine for Children 5-11 years old**

We have so many people 12 years plus who are already fully vaccinated. This is wonderful for our community as they now have really good COVID-19 protection- one dose gives 33% percent protection for COVID symptoms along with 95% protection from hospitalization, and two doses gives 88% protection from COVID-19 symptoms. A reduction in people becoming infected with the virus also means a reduction in the risk of spreading the virus to others – essential for all in the school setting.

Supporting your child to receive the COVID-19 vaccine will protect your child from becoming sick, and also protect those around them. It is key to helping our schools remain open for in-person learning. An additional benefit is that children who are fully vaccinated (14 days or more following second dose) and who are symptom free, can stay in the classroom if there is someone with COVID-19 in the class or on the bus. Others in the class will have to stay home for up to 10 days.

**Health Canada is currently reviewing the Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine developed specifically for children age 5 to 11. It has already been approved in the United States.**

You can learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine from some Q and A’s at “Max the Vax” developed for parents and children through a collaboration between the Ontario Association of the Children’s Aid Societies and the Canadian Medical Association. <https://www.oacas.org/what-we-do/communications-and-public-engagement/maxthevax/>

Also reach out to your family physician, nurse or nurse practitioner if you still have questions. We will continue to update our website as more information becomes available for the 5-11 age group. In the meantime, let’s start the conversation now.

The Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit, along with many community partners will be offering COVID-19 vaccine clinics when the vaccine is approved. Start to think about which environment would work best for your child.

Venue	Description
Regular Community Clinics – Fixed Sites (Almonte, Smiths Falls, Kemptville and Brockville)	<p>These sites provide a lot of access; they occur frequently and will likely have a time that works for most schedules. It is quick and efficient.</p> <p>They are typically in a large room, with rows or stations. There will be a few private areas available, but the open concept will provide visual stimulation and provide the opportunity for role modeling for the younger population.</p> <p>You will have access to a group of Physicians, Nurses and other Clinical staff to help support your child and answer your questions.</p>

	This might not be a good environment for a child who is extremely sensitive to noises and activity.
Mobile Community Clinics – Various communities throughout Leeds, Grenville and Lanark	These are similar look and feel to our regular community clinics but are much smaller in scale. Nurses and doctors will be able to answer your questions.  The team travels to different communities, so they occur less frequently, but is a great option for those that have transportation issues.
Family physicians and nurse practitioners	Family physicians and nurse practitioners may provide vaccine in their daily office hours or in a clinic outside of office hours. They can provide a more private environment and can answer your questions. You can call to find out what is possible.
Local Pharmacies	Our website <a href="http://www.healthunit.org">www.healthunit.org</a> will have information about pharmacies.  They do provide convenient hours and locations, and the pharmacist can answer questions
In Home Vaccines	For Eligible Children only: Children with complex health care needs or have an extreme needle phobia may benefit from the in the home vaccine program provided by local paramedics. Your health care provider or the Health Unit can make this referral.
Kids Come First – CHEO’s COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic	<a href="https://www.cheo.on.ca/en/news/kids-come-first-vaccination-clinic-at-cheo.aspx">https://www.cheo.on.ca/en/news/kids-come-first-vaccination-clinic-at-cheo.aspx</a> A special clinic run by CHEO for children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• with a history of anaphylaxis (severe allergy requiring epi-pen)</li> <li>• who have medical complexities or who are technology-dependent that makes it difficult to attend a community clinic (ex: tracheostomy &amp; ventilator or uncontrolled seizure disorder)</li> <li>• who have immunosuppression</li> <li>• with conditions that makes it challenging to be in crowded spaces (anxiety, autism)</li> <li>• with other medical reasons that are not listed above but make it challenging for the youth to be vaccinated in the community</li> </ul>

If you have additional questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit <https://healthunit.org/health-information/covid-19/protection/> or call our School Line at 1-866-236-0123.

Sincerely,  
Original signed by:  
Paula J. Stewart, MD, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer