



## COVID-19 Vaccination for Youth (ages 12+)

### Informed Consent Process at COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

This document is intended to support health-care providers who may not be familiar with the youth population and who are providing COVID-19 vaccines to youth in mobile clinic settings.

#### Consent for youth

- There is no legal age of consent in Ontario<sup>1</sup> – capable youth can give consent to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Youth do not have to be accompanied by an adult to receive their COVID-19 vaccine.
- Informed consent is an active process that includes a discussion of the risks and benefits of the treatment or procedure.
- It is the professional and legal responsibility of the health-care provider administering the COVID-19 vaccine to determine capacity of the individual and to obtain informed consent prior to immunization.

#### Consent for youth at mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinics

- All individuals attending a mobile vaccination clinic must be able to understand and appreciate the benefits, possible reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized to provide consent.
- Capable youth do not need a parent or guardian to consent on their behalf, and do not need to be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian to get the COVID-19 vaccine.
- If the youth is incapable of consenting to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, consent from their substitute decision-maker, such as a parent or legal guardian, will be needed.

#### Advice on speaking to young people

- Make it clear to the parent/guardian and youth attending the clinic that the youth is your patient by speaking directly to them:

“We’re really glad you came to get your COVID-19 vaccine today and that your parents/caregiver/guardian came along to support you.”

- Engage in an active consent process:

“Do you understand the risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine?”

- Offer to complete their screening and consent process independent of their parent/guardian:

“I have some sensitive medical questions to ask – would you like your parent/guardian to leave or stay?”

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<sup>1</sup> Health Care Consent Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 2, Sched. A <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/96h02#BK13>  
Informed Consent for Youth – V4 – 05.28.21  
Youth Vaccine Subgroup – Toronto Region

## What happens if...

In scenarios one and two, if a resolution cannot be reached with a brief 5 to 10-minute discussion, consider referring the family to have a discussion with their primary health-care provider to explore their individual situation in more detail.

1. The parent or legal guardian wants the youth to be vaccinated, but the youth does not want the vaccine:

After a discussion of risk and benefit, if the youth does not provide consent, do not proceed.

2. The youth wants a vaccine, but the parent or legal guardian does not want them to get the vaccine:

Speak directly to the youth and ensure they understand that they have a right to consent to a vaccine on their own. They can choose to proceed with vaccination at that time or return on their own at another time to be vaccinated.

Encourage the family to speak to their primary health-care provider for a further discussion if required.

3. A youth discloses a concerning health-care issue and/or asks for help (e.g., pregnancy, homelessness, abuse, substance use):

Ask the youth for their full name and contact information and ensure follow up. Consider the following options:

- Ask the youth if they are able to follow up with their primary health-care provider.
- If they do not have a primary health-care provider, refer them to a Paediatric Consult clinic or Adolescent Medicine Clinic in their community.
  - Liaise with the paediatric team at the mobile/hospital team affiliated with the mobile clinic.
- If there is no Paediatric Consult clinic or Adolescent Medicine Clinic in their community, you may refer directly to Adolescent Medicine at SickKids, by sending an email to:

Dr. Alene Toulany – [alene.toulany@sickkids.ca](mailto:alene.toulany@sickkids.ca) (Co-lead Adolescent Medicine Consultation Clinics and Service)

## Additional Resources

Canadian Paediatric Society – Position Statement

[Medical decision-making in paediatrics: Infancy to adolescence](#)

[AboutKidsHealth – COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

Toronto Public Health:

- [COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ for Youth](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Infographic for Youth](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Informed Consent for Youth](#)