

## WHAT DISADVANTAGES MIGHT THE VACCINE HAVE?

The vaccine from BioNTech is regarded as largely safe by practically all paediatricians and has been generally classified as harmless. In the authorization study in the USA the side effects were examined for approximately 2.000 children and were classified as minor. The vaccine shows the same side effects as other vaccines, especially time periods of not feeling well and local side effects at the area of injection around the arm. There is no data on rare side effects in this age group, therefore an evaluation can't be done now.

## ARE THERE SPECIAL REASONS, THAT SPEAK FOR A VACCINATION OF A CHILD?

Yes, there are such reasons. These can be significant comorbidities of the child (e.g., severe heart defects, immune defects or through medication that weakens the immune response, severe lung diseases, diabetes mellitus). But also diseases in the direct family, when a child's infection might potentially be harmful for parents, grandparents or siblings, speak especially for a vaccination.

In the end, a leaflet can't give all the answers to all cases. When in doubt speak with your paediatrist about this.

## ARE THERE SPECIAL REASONS, THAT SPEAK AGAINST VACCINATING A CHILD?

No, there are no such reasons. Only when there is a known allergy to components that are part of the vaccine, the vaccine would be waived.

With some diseases the effect of the vaccine might be reduced. If necessary, the vaccine must be timed properly with other therapies.

## SUMMARY

REASON FOR A VACCINATION	REASONS AGAINST A VACCINATION
Relevant comorbidities of the child itself	Minor individual use for a healthy child due to the low risk of the disease in this age group
Relevant comorbidities/risks of direct contact persons in the family	
Worries about severe progression of disease and worries about so far unknown long-term effects of the disease	Risk is rarer, possibly not yet known side effects, that could outweigh the use
The vaccine is publicly approved and effective, after medical advisory according to the ständige impfkommision (stiko) for every child possible	The so far missing explicit recommendation from the Ständigen Impfkommision (STIKO) for all children, but prioritizing children with comorbidities
Protection for the family and protection for the child from restrictions due to quarantine/improved participation	Fears/fear of injections (needles) of the child, especially at younger ages

[bielefeld.de](http://bielefeld.de)  
[evkb.de/kinderklinik](http://evkb.de/kinderklinik)  
[bvkj.de](http://bvkj.de)

[impfdashboard.de](http://impfdashboard.de)

[rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/ImpfungenAZ/COVID-19/COVID-19.html](http://rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/ImpfungenAZ/COVID-19/COVID-19.html)

[dgpi.de/covid-19-survey-update/](http://dgpi.de/covid-19-survey-update/)

Evaluation of the BNT162b2 Covid-19 Vaccine in Children 5 to 11 Years of Age | NEJM

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## Should I get my child vaccinated against the Corona virus?

An orientation assistance on the vaccination decision for parents

## Dear parents,

We would like to thank you and encourage you to deal with the topic of vaccination responsibly. For the question "should I get my child vaccinated against the Corona virus?" there are different answers, so that we would like to assist you in making up your mind.

For a medical decision with regards to a vaccination it always makes sense to contrast the risks as well as the use of a vaccine. When the use is higher than the risk, then it is advisable to go through with the action. When the risks outweigh the use, then the action of vaccination is rather not recommended. This way of evaluation has been done explicitly for the vaccine against the Corona virus by scientists for adults: The use of the vaccine clearly outweighs all known and thinkable risks. Especially people that are at higher risk because of their age or their comorbidities are clearly benefiting from getting vaccinated against the Corona virus.

For this reason, it is important, to show you the use and risks of the vaccine for children, so that you can evaluate on the question about the vaccination decision for your child. In short one can say: The risks of a vaccine will be very little for your child, but at the same time the use of the vaccine will be less than for adults – simply because children rarely severely get sick from Covid.

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## HOW DOES CORONA EFFECT CHILDREN?

Most children experience a completely harmless and often unnoticed course of infection. Corona differs very little in that aspect from all other countless viral infections that children are dealing with. From the known children and young people with a Corona infection (approximately 550.000 until 1.12.2021) less than 1% had to be treated stationary at the hospital. Most children weren't at the hospital because of being sick with the Corona virus but because of completely different medical procedures. Rather rarely do children get severely sick from Covid so that they must be stationed at the hospital for their infection; and less than 5% of the stationary treated had to be in intensive care. Deaths of children and young people were very rare, most of these cases in Germany (20 of the 29 deceased in total) happened to children with special comorbidities.

A special complication from Corona during childhood is the so called "Pädiatrische Inflammatorische Multiorgan-syndrom"(PIMS). The PIMS-Syndrom is a delayed reaction after an asymptomatic Covid infection and comes with high fever, conjunctivitis, skin rashes and other inflammatory reactions. PIMS rarely occurs, until October 2021 there were only 398 children reported in Germany (approximately 0,07% of infected).

The risk for long Covid for children is completely unclear. Many consequences, that are called long Covid, can probably also be traced back to other causes or there are similar mostly temporarily appearances that come with other infections. Whether Corona has long term effects on children – and if so, what are they -, has to be investigated in further research.

## WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES FOR A CORONA VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN?

A vaccination has four goals: To protect from one's own sickness, to protect the direct environment, to allow for participation, also e.g., the school visit, and to contribute to the "herd immunity", meaning to enhance the protection of the population.

The Corona vaccine works like other vaccines. Through the vaccine the body forms antibodies against the virus before the first contact. Through the vaccine the immune system is prepared and can better defend against the infection. The vaccine that has been approved for children from 5 to 11 years of age is from the company BioNTech, which has been shown to be highly effective: approximately 90% protection from a severe Covid-19 infection (e.g., intensive care at the hospital) and approximately 75% against an infection with minor to moderate symptoms.

Vaccinated „Kontaktpersonen“ contact persons from infected people don't have to undergo quarantine. If children are infected regardless of being vaccinated, the quarantine rule is shortened. So, the participation of children is supported through the vaccine.

A high vaccination rate amongst adults is more important for the fight against the pandemic than the vaccination of children – the group that consists of adults is way bigger and their risks of catching the virus and getting sick are way higher than the risks for children. The vaccination of children does contribute to the herd immunity however and therefore shortens the pandemic. The danger, that schools and kitas must be closed is also being minimized. The lockdown has led to psychological and emotional disturbances for many children and has harmed the health of children more than the Corona infection itself.

The decision to vaccinate a child or not should be oriented towards the wellbeing of the child.