**Covid vaccination**

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Inside the Islamabad Model School, G 10/1 the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out ticked over with practiced calm. Students queued outside the hall and entered one at a time. Meerab Hameed, a 7-year-old Grade II student handed over the white A4 size paper to the team assistant who entered the child’s data on a mobile app that goes into the National Immunisation Management System, by checking the Child registration certificate, Form B. This was the third day of the paediatric COVID-19 vaccination campaign that started on the 19th of this month in selected districts of Punjab, Sindh, and Islamabad, supported by COVAX. All children aged 5 years or less than 12 years will receive two doses of the COVID-19 paediatric vaccine, free of cost.

Pakistan had achieved commendable progress in terms of vaccinating the majority of the eligible population above 12 years with Covid 19 vaccine. In the early months of the pandemic, it was assumed that children are not likely to get COVID-19. However, recent statistics show that the paediatric population (5 to 11 years) is also vulnerable to the disease. After aggressive planning on juvenile immunisation (initially 05-11yrs), Sindh, Punjab, and the federal capital initiated the campaign in high-disease burden areas.

[U.S. warns of catastrophic consequences if Russia uses nuclear weapons in Ukraine](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Sep-2022/u-s-warns-of-catastrophic-consequences-if-russia-uses-nuclear-weapons-in-ukraine)

Pakistan’s Expanded Programme for Immunisation] which offers routine immunisation vaccines to children under two years had the inherent strength to smoothly roll out COVID-19 vaccines as well. Equipped with a massive supply chain—a branched network linking federal warehouses to provincial, divisional and district stores made Covid vaccine storage and transportation possible. No doubt, vaccine storage facilities required modification. The existing cold chain worked for some COVID-19 vaccines, but was unsuitable for Pfizer vaccines, and demanded storage at minus temperatures—in “ultra-cold chain” (UCC) conditions. With months of support and hard work from partners, Pakistan scrambled and constructed a limited UCC network concentrated at the center and in big cities.

In the beginning, it seemed that women and girls vaccinated against Covid were fewer in numbers compared to men. Increasing the number and deployment of female vaccinators proved successful. Robust community engagement and awareness further contributed to bridging the communication gap and more and more women started turning up for adult vaccination. Here at the IMSI primary school too, girls outnumber boys with a 60/40 ratio. The Paediatric Pfizer jab is the most recent addition to Pakistan’s COVID-19 vaccine arsenal, with the first consignment of 16 million doses landing in the country. This is only 25 percent of the total 64 million Pfizer-BioNTech paediatric doses. The dose of the COVID-19 vaccine given to children ages 5 to under 12 is one-third of the dose as is given to adults.

[Ijtehad for Better Society](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Sep-2022/ijtehad-for-better-society)

Studies showed that the Pfizer vaccine could be thawed down to 2-8 degrees centigrade for 31 days. EPI’s massive network of cold chain equipment for 2-8 degrees everywhere in Pakistan. Thus there was no problem in rolling out Pfizer across Pakistan.” Like adults, children’s Covid 19 vaccination data will be recorded with the National Immunisation Management System (NIMS) and a vaccination certificate can be acquired for the vaccinated child.

Data entry of children who do not have the NADRA documents will be done in the prescribed format. All children even without CRC/ B Form will be vaccinated during the campaign. CNIC number of parents will be noted by the vaccination team and recorded on their data sheet of Covid 19 Vaccination. Parents who do not have their children’s CRC are encouraged by the Immunisation Program to get their children registered with NADRA at the earliest. Vaccines are safe and effective. They help protect a child from getting very sick with Covid-19. A child can have a COVID-19 vaccination regardless of whether they have already had COVID-19. This is because the vaccine provides additional protection by reducing the risk of a repeat COVID-19 infection. Vaccinated children are much less likely to be hospitalised. Getting vaccinated is the best way for a child to be protected. All age groups contribute to the transmission of the virus, and vaccinating children helps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 across families, schools, and communities.