



Australian Government



COVID-19 vaccine information for children, teens and parents/guardians

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Vaccination is recommended for everyone in Australia aged 5 years and over.

Vaccination is also recommended for [children aged 6 months to under 5 years](#) who are severely immunocompromised, or have disability, as well as those who have complex and/or multiple health conditions that increase their risk of severe COVID-19.

Why should children and teens get vaccinated?

There are lots of reasons to get vaccinated, including:

- protecting you from catching COVID-19
- reducing your risk of severe disease, long-term side effects or long COVID
- helping you get back to school
- reconnecting you with your family and friends
- getting you back to doing the things you love, like team sports, going to concerts and travel
- slowing the spread of the virus in the community.

Vaccination protects you and it also protects your:

- family
- friends
- schoolmates
- teammates
- workmates.

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

COVID-19 vaccines can stop people from becoming sick with COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Australia do not contain any live virus and cannot give you COVID-19. They help your body recognise an important part of the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19, called the spike protein. Your body can then better build an immune response to the virus, to help prevent you getting very sick.

What to expect after vaccination

The vaccine starts to protect you against COVID-19 from about 2–3 weeks after the first dose.

That is why it is important to continue to be safe and to remember to:

- practise good hygiene
- practise physical distancing
- follow the limits for public gatherings
- understand how to isolate if you need to.

What if I have a reaction to the vaccine?

You may experience some side effects after vaccination. Most side effects last no more than a couple of days and you will recover without any problems. Common reactions to vaccination include:

- pain, redness and/or swelling where you received the needle
- mild fever
- headache.

If you have any concerns about symptoms you can get more information at www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-side-effect-checker.

Which vaccine will I get?

There are several key differences in COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 6 months to under 5 years, 5 to 11 years and for people aged 12 years and over. These are outlined in the table on the next page.

Key differences between primary course COVID-19 vaccines for children and teens

	Children's Comirnaty (Pfizer)	Comirnaty (Pfizer)	Spikevax (Moderna)	Spikevax (Moderna)	Spikevax (Moderna)	Nuvaxovid (Novavax)
Age range	5 to 11 years	12 years and older	6 months to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 years and older	12 years and older
Dosage	Child dose (0.2ml after dilution)	Adolescent / Adult dose (0.3ml after dilution)	Paediatric dose (0.25ml)	Child dose (0.25ml)	Adolescent / Adult dose (0.5ml)	Adolescent / Adult dose (0.5mL)
Vial cap colour	Orange	Purple or grey	Blue (purple stripe)	Red	Red	Blue
Recommended interval between first and second dose	8 weeks ¹	8 weeks ¹	8 weeks ¹	8 weeks ¹	8 weeks ¹	8 weeks ¹

¹. The vaccine interval can be shortened in special circumstances to a minimum of 3 weeks for Pfizer and 4 weeks for Moderna. More information is available here: www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-patient-resources#resources-for-5-to-11-year-old-vaccination.

Remember your second appointment

It is important that you get two doses of the vaccine as the second dose is likely to extend your protection against COVID-19.

The recommended interval is 8 weeks, but the interval between doses can be reduced to 3 weeks for Pfizer and Novavax or 4 weeks for Moderna in some circumstances.

Boosters for adolescents

People aged 16 years or over, including people with severe immunocompromise and pregnant women, should have a booster dose (third dose for most people) three months or more after their primary course, to prolong their protection against COVID-19.

An additional booster, or fourth dose, is recommended for people aged 16 years and over at increased risk of severe illness, to be given three months after their first booster dose.

A COVID-19 booster dose is also recommended for people aged 12-15 who are severely immunocompromised, or have a disability with significant or complex health needs, or have severe, complex, or multiple health conditions that increase the risk of severe COVID-19. This should be given three months or more after their primary course,

Booster doses are not currently recommended for children under the age of 12.

How is the information you provide at your appointment used?

For information on how personal details are collected, stored and used you can visit www.health.gov.au/using-our-websites/privacy/privacy-notice-for-covid-19-vaccinations.

Consent

Parents may be asked to consent to their child being vaccinated. A special information resource and consent form for each vaccine has been developed for parents and guardians of children. These are available here: www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-patient-resources#resources-for-5-to-11year-old-vaccination.

In general, a parent or legal guardian of a child has the authority to consent to vaccination. In some states and territories, older adolescents may be able to provide their own consent.

Your child's COVID-19 vaccine will be recorded on their Immunisation History Statement. If your child is aged 14 years and older, you can no longer access their Australian Immunisation Record for privacy reasons. You can get their immunisation history statement if you have their consent. More information is available via Services Australia at: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register/how-get-immunisation-history-statement.

More information about consent is available in the Australian Immunisation Handbook at: immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccination-procedures/preparing-for-vaccination.

Alternatively, you can check with your state or territory health authority about these laws: www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-contacts.