



COVID-19 vaccines for ages 5 to 11

Frequently asked questions

Current as of 31 January 2022

General information about vaccination for 5 to 11 year-olds

Can children aged 5 to 11 get vaccinated?

Yes. Australia's medical regulator, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), has approved the use of the **Pfizer** vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 years.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) also recommends use of the Pfizer vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 years.

When will children aged 5 to 11 be able to get vaccinated?

The Federal Government has announced the 5 to 11 year-old vaccination program began on 10 January 2022.

Where can children get vaccinated?

The vaccines are available through participating:

- general practices
- pharmacies
- Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations
- family-friendly State vaccination centres.

There will also be some community-based vaccination clinics, including some in primary schools, over Term 1, 2022.

Parents and guardians can book an appointment for their children at a doctor's clinic or pharmacy on the [Australian Government's Vaccine Clinic Finder](#).

They can also book at a [state-run vaccination centre](#).

Will the Moderna vaccine also be made available to children?

The TGA and ATAGI are also assessing the **Moderna** vaccine for children 6-11 years of age, with advice expected over the coming weeks.

My child will be turning 12 soon after January 2022 – should I wait for them to turn 12 and then have them get the adult dose?

Your child is best to get their first vaccine as soon as they are eligible, which is in January. If they turn 12 years of age after receiving their first dose as part of the 5-to-11 schedule, their second dose will be the higher adult dose.

Vaccine doses and intervals

Is the vaccine dose for children aged 5 to 11 the same as the dose for people aged 12 and over?

No, the dose of the Pfizer vaccine given to children aged 5 to 11 is one-third of the dose given to those aged 12 and over.

How many doses will children aged 5 to 11 need?

The recommended schedule for vaccination in this age group is two doses, 8 weeks apart, even if they turn 12 after their first dose.

This can be shortened to 3 weeks in special circumstances, such as:

- before the start of significant immunosuppression
- before international travel.

My child has a medical condition – is the dosage interval for them different?

The dose interval for children at higher risk of COVID-19 (for example, those with underlying medical conditions) can be shortened to **3 weeks** where there is ongoing community transmission.

You can see the list of medical conditions that qualify for the reduction in dosage interval times in [Table 1 of this ATAGI statement](#).

Parents and guardians can book second appointments for children aged 5 to 11 who are medically at-risk at a state vaccination centre via the:

- [online booking system](#), or
- Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398.

Be sure to select an appointment at the 3-week dose interval.

Will children aged 5 to 11 need a booster dose?

The TGA and ATAGI have not yet provided approvals or recommendations around booster doses for children aged 5 to 11.

The Victorian Government will inform the community of any future updates regarding this.

Vaccine safety and side effects

How do we know that the vaccine is safe for 5 to 11 year-olds?

The TGA and ATAGI are reviewing additional clinical evidence and safety data from clinical trials of mRNA vaccines in children aged 5 to 11 years and real-world data from the United States (US) vaccine rollout in this age group.

In the clinical Pfizer trial, which included 3,100 children, there were no vaccine safety concerns and no serious side effects detected.

The vaccines are already being administered to children aged 5 to 11 years in the US, with roughly 5 million children having already received their first dose. Programs are commencing in Canada, in Europe, Israel and elsewhere.

After their vaccination, children will be monitored for at least 15 minutes to make sure they are OK. Children with a history of anaphylaxis will be monitored for 30 minutes.

Is there ongoing monitoring of vaccine safety for young children?

Yes. The TGA and ATAGI are reviewing available clinical evidence and safety data from clinical trials of mRNA vaccines in children aged 5 to 11 years and real-world data from the US vaccine rollout in this age group.

[AusVaxSafety](#) conducts ongoing, thorough vaccine safety surveillance in the Australian community.

Are the vaccines safe for children with disabilities?

Yes. There is no evidence to suggest that children with a disability are more likely to suffer adverse effects from vaccination than other children.

The vaccine rollout in Victoria will include accessible options and supports for children who may have mild anxiety about vaccination or minor behavioural issues, as well as children with developmental disabilities, autism and/or sensory issues.

There will also be services available for children with more severe needle phobia.

What are the side effects of vaccination in young children?

Like any other medicine, all vaccines can have side effects.

Children can experience common and expected side effects after the Pfizer vaccine, such as a sore arm, headache and fatigue. These usually only need treatment with paracetamol, and children rarely need to see a doctor for treatment.

More serious side effects are very rare.

There are no concerns about long-term safety of the mRNA vaccines in children, with the majority of reported side effects after vaccination occurring early – within the first 6 to 8 weeks.

The Victorian Government's Coronavirus website has more [information about possible vaccine side effects](#).

You can also find out more about the [Pfizer vaccine](#).

Eligibility and consent

Who is eligible to get vaccinated?

Everybody aged 5 years and over can get vaccinated.

Is it mandatory for children aged 5 to 11 to get vaccinated?

It is not mandatory to get vaccinated. However, by getting vaccinated, young children are helping to protect themselves and their families, as well as their schools and communities.

See the section below for more information on the benefits of vaccination for children aged 5 to 11.

Does a parent or guardian have to give permission for a child aged 5 to 11 to get vaccinated?

A parent or guardian must provide consent for a child aged 5 to 11 to get vaccinated.

Under Victorian law, a child aged 5 to 11 cannot provide their own consent.

A parent or guardian can attend the vaccine appointment with the young person and provide consent for them.

Benefits of vaccination for children aged 5 to 11

I've heard children do not get as sick if they get COVID-19. Why should they get vaccinated?

Children who are vaccinated will receive direct protection against COVID-19.

While children and young people are less likely than adults to get severe symptoms if they contract COVID-19, some can still get very sick – this includes children with certain pre-existing conditions, such as obesity, Down syndrome, or cerebral palsy.

Some children and adolescents can also develop chronic symptoms more than one or two months after COVID infection. This is called Long COVID.

Children can transmit COVID-19, but vaccination will help prevent them transmitting the virus to other children and older age groups, including family members who may be at higher risk, such as grandparents.

Vaccinating younger children also means there is less chance of school closures in future. This will help children to have more face-to-face learning, play time, engaging in different activities, and being with their friends.

COVID-19 positive people and people isolating

Can a person get vaccinated if they have COVID-19?

No. If a person tests positive for COVID-19, they must immediately go home and isolate. This includes children aged 5 to 11.

A person who tests positive to COVID-19 cannot leave their home for any reason – not even to get vaccinated.

Can a child aged 5 to 11 who has had COVID-19 get vaccinated?

Yes. They can get vaccinated as soon as they have passed the acute stage of the virus. Your doctor can tell you more about this.

Can a person who does not have COVID-19, but is in isolation, go and get vaccinated?

No. If a person has been told to isolate, they must follow the advice they are given about when they can leave their home. This includes children aged 5 to 11.

If a person is unsure about whether or not they should attend a vaccination, call the Coronavirus Hotline on **1800 675 398** (Press 0 for an interpreter).

Should a child get vaccinated if they feel unwell?

No. A parent should arrange a COVID-19 test for their child, and keep the child at home until they receive a negative result if the child:

- feels even a little unwell
- has been to an exposure site
- has been in close contact with someone who might have COVID-19.

To receive this document in another format, please email COVIDvaccination@dhhs.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 651 160, using the National Relay Service (13 36 77) if required.

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