

COVID-19 VACCINE for children aged 5 to 11:

Information for parents and guardians



Why should children get vaccinated?

Vaccinating children aged 5 to 11 will help protect our families, Community and those most vulnerable from COVID-19.

Most children who get the virus experience a mild illness, but some – including those with no history of health conditions – can become very sick.

A clinical trial showed that children who had 2 doses of the vaccine were over 90% less likely to get sick from COVID-19 than unvaccinated children. In addition to the benefits vaccination brings to their own health, there's less risk they can spread COVID-19 to family and community.

Importantly, vaccinating your child will help life return to normal without disruptions and will support their safe enjoyment of other activities such as school, travel and sports.

No vaccine is 100 per cent effective, so it is possible that your child could still get sick from COVID-19 after vaccination. However, evidence shows that people who are vaccinated are much less likely to get seriously ill from COVID-19, or need to go to hospital.

Is the vaccine safe?

The current COVID-19 vaccines available in Australia for 5 to 11 year-olds are safe and effective. All COVID-19 vaccines given to children aged 5 to 11 years old have gone through clinical trials with no serious safety concerns. The safety of all COVID-19 vaccinations are continually monitored across Australia and the world.

Since the start of the rollout, as of February 2022, over 1.1 million doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to Australian children aged 5 to 11 years old.

Australia is continuously monitoring the side effects of the vaccines in children. The side effects are similar to what has been seen in the clinical trials and in other countries. So far there have been no serious safety concerns from the vaccination rollout in Australia.

In Australia, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is available for children aged between 5-11 years old. Spikevax (Moderna) vaccine has now also been approved for children aged 6-11 years.

The vaccine dose approved in Australia for children aged 5 to 11 is smaller than the dose for people aged 12 years and over – one third of the active component of the vaccine. This is similar to other routinely recommended vaccines, like the flu vaccine. Vaccine doses are generally based on the developmental stage, or age of the immune system in a younger person rather than weight.

What are the side effects?

It's less common for children to have expected side effects in the first one or two days after vaccination compared to teenagers and young adults. The most common side effects that children could experience may be a sore arm where they had the needle, a headache and fatigue.

Myocarditis and pericarditis have been associated with the use of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. Both are very rare adverse events.

Contact your healthcare provider straight away if, after vaccination, your child experiences:

- symptoms of a severe allergic reaction, such as difficulty breathing, wheezing, a fast heartbeat, or if they collapse
- chest pain, pressure or discomfort, irregular heartbeat, skipped beats or 'fluttering', fainting, shortness of breath, pain with breathing
- new or unexpected symptoms, or if you are worried about a potential side effect
- an expected side effect of the vaccine that has not gone away after a few days, like headache, fever or chills.

What if my child already had COVID-19?

If your child already had COVID-19, tell your healthcare provider. It's still recommended to vaccinate children who have already had COVID-19. Children can be vaccinated as soon as they feel well after a COVID-19 infection. It can take up to four weeks for symptoms to resolve completely. Please speak with your healthcare provider to discuss your child's personal circumstances.

Where can I get a vaccine?

Walk-ins are available for any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children age 5+ at all state-run vaccination clinics. No bookings are necessary. Please call your local Aboriginal Health organisations for more information on vaccination bookings, or call the Aboriginal COVID Infoline on 1800 312 911.

Guardians and carers of children can get their booster at the same time as their child's vaccination.

Remember your next appointment

It is important that your child receives 2 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for 5 to 11 year-olds, or the Moderna vaccine for 6 to 11 year-olds. For both vaccines, the two doses will be given 8 weeks apart. The dosing interval can be shortened to a minimum of 3 weeks in certain situations. You can speak with your trusted healthcare professional or immunisation provider for more information.

Further Information:

For more detailed information about vaccinating your child against COVID-19:

- visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au/protectcommunity
- call the COVID-19 Aboriginal Infoline on **1800 312 911**. It's open 9am to 5pm, seven days a week
- contact your local Aboriginal Health Service or healthcare provider.



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