

COVID-19 vaccine NIP transition

health.gov.au/immunisation

Key points and updates

- From 1 October 2026, COVID-19 vaccines will be funded under the National Immunisation Program (NIP). This will replace the stand-alone [National COVID-19 Vaccine Program](#) established during Australia's COVID-19 pandemic response.
- Under the NIP, funded COVID-19 vaccines will no longer be available as a universal program. Instead, funded access will only be available for eligible groups at highest risk of severe disease, including:
 - all adults aged 75 years and over (two funded doses per year, given approximately six months apart)
 - adults aged 65–74 years (one funded dose per year)
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50–74 years (one funded dose per year)
 - adults aged 18–64 years with severe immunocompromise (one funded dose per year).
- People who are not eligible for a free COVID-19 vaccine through the NIP may choose to purchase the vaccine privately after an individual benefit-risk discussion with their health professional.
- States and territories will manage ordering, distribution, reporting and program support for COVID-19 vaccines in line with routine processes used for other NIP vaccines.

Table: COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for NIP-funded doses from 1 October 2026[#]

Recommended	All recommended doses are funded under the NIP for eligible people.		
Consider	Where a vaccine dose is listed as 'consider', this is not funded under the NIP but can be purchased privately.		
Age group	No medical risk conditions	Medical risk conditions*	Severe immunocompromise [†]
≥75 years	Recommended 2 annual doses[‡]		
65–74 years	Recommended 1 annual dose	Recommended 1 annual dose	
		Consider 2nd annual dose [‡]	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50–74 years	Recommended 1 annual dose	Recommended 1 annual dose	
		Consider 2nd annual dose [‡]	
18–64 years	Consider 1 annual dose		Recommended 1 annual dose
			Consider 2nd annual dose [‡]

[#] COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for people who are not eligible for NIP-funded vaccination are available in the Australian Immunisation Handbook

^{*} See the Australian Immunisation Handbook for examples of medical risk conditions

[†] View the Table. Types of medical conditions and immunosuppressive therapy and associated levels of immunocompromise in the Vaccination for people who are immunocompromised chapter in the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

[‡] The recommended intervals between doses are approximately 6 months, allowing shorter intervals when clinically appropriate.

Why vaccinate against COVID-19

COVID-19 is a contagious infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Symptoms can range from a mild respiratory illness to severe pneumonia, sepsis and/or multi-organ failure, leading to hospitalisation and death.

COVID-19 affects people of all ages, but older adults, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people with severe immunocompromise or certain medical conditions, are at the highest risk of severe disease or death. See the Australian Immunisation Handbook for examples of risk conditions.

COVID-19 is now endemic in Australia and vaccination reduces the risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19.

Who should receive a COVID-19 vaccine

From 1 October 2026, eligible people will be able to access vaccines for free through the NIP.

People who are not eligible for a NIP-funded COVID-19 vaccine may choose to purchase the vaccine privately based on an individual benefit-risk discussion with their health professional.

See the *COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for NIP-funded doses from 1 October 2026 table on page one.*

Contraindications and precautions

Individuals should not receive a COVID-19 vaccine if they have a history of anaphylaxis:

- after a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine from the same class (anaphylaxis after one mRNA COVID-19 vaccine is a contraindication to all mRNA COVID-19 vaccines)
- to any component of the specific COVID-19 vaccine.

The following groups can receive a COVID-19 vaccine with caution:

- individuals who have had recent myocarditis or pericarditis (within the last 3 months)
- those with acute rheumatic fever or acute rheumatic heart disease with active myocardial inflammation, and people with acute decompensated heart failure.

These individuals should seek specialist advice on timing, precautions and future vaccination options.

Co-administration of COVID-19 vaccines

Co-administration of COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines, including influenza, pneumococcal, RSV and shingles, is safe and recommended where clinically appropriate. Encouraging co-administration can improve uptake and reduce missed opportunities for vaccination.

COVID-19 vaccine safety and adverse

COVID-19 vaccines used in Australia are safe and continue to be monitored through safety surveillance. Common adverse events include injection site pain, fatigue and headache. These usually last no more than a few days and resolve without any treatment.

Serious adverse events after COVID-19 vaccination are very rare. These can include anaphylaxis, myocarditis and/or pericarditis. Myocarditis and pericarditis cases associated with mRNA COVID-19 vaccination are generally less severe and have fewer complications than those from other causes (such as from COVID-19 infection).

The benefits of COVID-19 vaccination in preventing severe illness and death, particularly in people at higher risk, far outweigh the very rare risk of serious adverse events. See the Australian Immunisation Handbook for further information.

Providers should [report unexpected or serious adverse events following immunisation \(AEFIs\) to their state and territory health departments](#).

Ordering, reporting and program operations

From 1 October 2026:

- COVID-19 vaccines will be ordered through state and territory systems, using the same processes as other NIP vaccines
- vaccination providers must meet jurisdictional requirements for NIP vaccine access
- cold chain breaches, vaccine errors and discards must be reported via state or territory processes.

View the Australian Immunisation Handbook for advice on transporting, storing and handling COVID-19 vaccines.

Australian Immunisation Register

It is mandatory to report administration of all COVID-19 vaccines to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), including free NIP vaccines and those purchased privately. This ensures that individuals have a complete and accurate record of their vaccinations.

For information on how to record vaccinations on the AIR, visit [Services Australia](#).

Keep up to date

Read the advice in this fact sheet in conjunction with:

The Australian Immunisation Handbook* available at immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au

* Updates to take effect 1 October 2026

Subscribe to the NIP Update email update service. Search 'NIP Updates' on health.gov.au.

COVID-19 vaccine information for immunisation professionals available at health.gov.au/topics/immunisation/vaccines/covid-19-vaccine

COVID-19 vaccine NIP transition – Information for consumers resource available at health.gov.au/topics/immunisation/vaccines/covid-19-vaccine

All information in this fact sheet is correct as of September 2026

State and territory health department contact numbers:

ACT	02 5124 9800
SA	1300 232 272
NSW	1300 066 055
TAS	1800 671 738
NT	08 8922 8044
VIC	immunisation@health.vic.gov.au
WA	08 9321 1312
QLD	Contact your local Public Health Unit