

Talking to patients about COVID-19 vaccines

This document is designed to assist health professionals treating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients to answer their questions about the COVID-19 vaccines.

- COVID-19 can cause very serious illness, especially for the elderly and those in our community who have existing medical conditions. Through the pandemic there have been more than 36,000 cases in Australia, with more than 180 cases among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- COVID-19 vaccines are free for everyone in Australia and are the best way of protecting you, your family and the community from getting very sick from COVID-19.
- Australia has two COVID-19 vaccines – AstraZeneca and Pfizer. We know both of these vaccines are incredibly effective at preventing severe illness and death from COVID-19. There is also promising evidence that the vaccines are likely to substantially reduce the chance of transmitting the virus to others.
- The [Pfizer](#) vaccine is the preferred vaccine for people aged under 60 years. The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses to be most effective, given between 3 and 6 weeks apart. It is most effective when given 3 weeks apart.
- The [AstraZeneca](#) vaccine is the preferred vaccine for people aged 60 and over. The AstraZeneca vaccine also requires two doses to be most effective, given between 4 and 12 weeks apart. It is most effective when given 12 weeks apart.
- Current evidence from clinical trials indicates that Australia's approved COVID-19 vaccines are likely to provide protection from a variety of variants of the COVID-19 virus. This information is still emerging and being closely monitored.
- When enough people in the community are vaccinated, it slows down the spread of the virus. With lots of people vaccinated, we rarely see the deadly diseases that vaccines prevent (including [diphtheria](#), [measles](#) and [meningococcal](#)).

For more information

For more detailed information, download the '[Information to assist healthcare workers talk to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about COVID-19 vaccines](#)' document.

Clinical information about COVID-19 vaccines can be found on the Department of Health [website](#).

COVID-19 vaccine reference guide

This is a quick reference guide designed to assist health professionals, treating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, find the most up to date and reliable COVID-19 information and resources. If you think a resource is missing, please contact covidvaccinecomms@health.gov.au

Ensuring you get reliable and up to date information

- [Information for COVID-19 vaccination providers](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccines clinical considerations](#). This webpage provides the latest clinical advice on the rollout, including advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation.
- [Advice for pregnant women](#). A decision guide to COVID-19 vaccination for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy.
- [Is it true?](#) Some patients may have heard information about COVID-19 vaccines that is not true. Answers from a trusted and reliable source to commonly asked questions are available on the website.

COVID-19 vaccine resources

- [Vaccine provider resources](#). A suite of resources that can be used by COVID-19 vaccine providers to communicate with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. Resources include culturally safe and appropriate videos, posters, fact sheets, handouts, social and web content.
- Resources using COVID-19 vaccine brand names: [Posters](#), [social](#) and [web](#) content to help vaccine providers advise what brands of COVID-19 vaccines they use in their clinic.
- [General COVID-19 vaccine communication materials](#), such as social tiles and videos that can be used across your clinic's social media platforms.
- [General Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) communication materials](#) that can be used during local outbreaks, to communicate important COVIDSafe messages, such as staying home when unwell, getting tested, and following local restrictions.

Where to direct your patients for more information:

- Visit the Department of Health website: www.health.gov.au/covid-19-vaccines
- Call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on 1800 020 080
- Follow the Department of Health on social media at @healthgovau