COVID-19 vaccines for children and teenagers: information for parents and guardians

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The COVID-19 vaccine is approved and recommended for people aged 5 years and older. COVID-19 vaccination appointments for children aged 5 and over are available now.

Spikevax (Moderna) is approved and recommended for people aged 12 years and older. It is currently being evaluated for children aged 6 to 11 years.

Why should children and teenagers get vaccinated?

There are lots of reasons for children and teenagers to get vaccinated against COVID-19, including:

- protecting them from catching COVID-19
- reducing their risk of getting very sick, long-term side effects or long COVID
- helping them get back to school
- reconnecting with their family and friends
- getting them back to doing things they enjoy, like team sports, going to concerts and travel, and
- slowing the spread of the virus in the community.

Vaccination against COVID-19 also protects their:

- family
- friends
- schoolmates, and
- teammates.

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

COVID-19 vaccines can stop people from becoming very sick with COVID-19. The vaccines train your body to get rid of COVID-19 if you come into contact with it.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not contain any live virus and cannot give you COVID-19.

What to expect after their vaccination

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

That is why it is important for your child to continue to be safe and:

- practise good hygiene, like washing their hands
- keep 1.5 metres away from other people
- follow the limits for public gatherings, and
- understand when and how to isolate if they need to.

Will they have side effects?

Your child may experience some side effects after vaccination. Most side effects last no more than a few days, and they will recover without any problems. Common reactions to vaccination include a:

- sore arm
- mild fever
- headache.

If you have any concerns about your child's symptoms, you can get more information at **www.health.gov.au** or call the National Coronavirus Helpline on **1800 020 080**. For interpreting services, call **131 450** and ask for the National Coronavirus Helpline.

You can also discuss any concerns or questions you have about COVID-19 vaccination with your doctor or health care professional before your child receives the vaccine.

Which vaccine will my child get?

There are some differences in COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 5 to 11 years and for people aged 12 years and over.

Children aged 5 to 11 years old will receive 2 doses of the vaccine, 8 weeks apart. This can be shortened to a minimum of 3 weeks in special circumstances. The dose for children aged 5 to 11 is one third of the dose for people aged 12 years and over.

Children aged 12 and older will receive 2 doses of the vaccine, 3 to 6 weeks apart.

Remember their second appointment

It is important that your child gets two doses of the vaccine, as the second dose provides the full protection against COVID-19 and ensures that the protection lasts for longer.

Consent

Parents may be asked to consent to their child being vaccinated.

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
https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-to-get-immunisation-history-statement

More information

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