COVID-19 vaccine information for children, teens and parents/guardians

Last updated: 11 February 2022

The Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine is approved and recommended for people aged 5 years and older.

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.

The vaccination rollout for children aged 5 to 11 started on 10 January 2022.

**Why should children and teens get vaccinated?**

There are lots of reasons to get vaccinated, including:

- protecting you from catching COVID-19
- reducing your risk of severe disease, long-term side effects or long COVID
- helping you get back to school
- reconnecting you with your family and friends
- getting you back to doing the things you love, like team sports, going to concerts and travel
- slowing the spread of the virus in the community.

Vaccination protects you, and it also protects your:

- family
- friends
- schoolmates
- teammates
- workmates.

**How do COVID-19 vaccines work?**

COVID-19 vaccines can stop people from becoming sick with COVID-19.
The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not contain any live virus and cannot give you COVID-19. They contain genetic code for an important part of the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19, called the spike protein.

After you get the vaccine, your body makes copies of the spike protein. Your immune system then learns to recognise and fight against the virus. The genetic code is then broken down quickly by the body.

**What to expect after vaccination**

The vaccine starts to protect you against COVID-19 from about 2–3 weeks after the first dose. That is why it is important to continue to be safe and to remember to:

- practise good hygiene
- practise physical distancing
- follow the limits for public gatherings
- understand how to isolate if you need to.

**What if I have a reaction to the vaccine?**

You may experience some side effects after vaccination. Most side effects last no more than a couple of days and you will recover without any problems. Common reactions to vaccination include:

- pain, redness and/or swelling where you received the needle
- mild fever
- headache.


**Which vaccine will I get?**

There are several key differences in COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 5 to 11 years and for people aged 12 years and over. These are outlined in the table below.

**Key differences for between COVID-19 vaccines for children and teens:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pfizer Paediatric</th>
<th>Comirnaty (Pfizer)</th>
<th>Spikevax (Moderna)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age range</strong></td>
<td>5 to 11 years</td>
<td>12 years and older</td>
<td>12 years and older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dosage</strong></td>
<td>Smaller dose</td>
<td>Adult dose</td>
<td>Adult dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.2ml after dilution)</td>
<td>(0.3ml after dilution)</td>
<td>(0.5ml after dilution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vial cap colour</strong></td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Purple or grey</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended interval between first and second dose</strong></td>
<td>8 weeks¹</td>
<td>3 to 6 weeks</td>
<td>4 to 6 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The first dose of the Pfizer vaccine for 5 to 11 year olds cannot be given until 8 weeks after the first dose due to the vaccination interval.

Remember your second appointment
It is important that you get two doses of the vaccine as the second dose is likely to extend your protection against COVID-19.
For children aged 5 to 11 years, the recommended interval is 8 weeks, and this interval can be shortened to a minimum of three weeks in special circumstances.
For adolescents aged 12 to 17 years, the recommended interval for Pfizer is 3 weeks, and this interval can be extended.

Boosters for adolescents aged 16 years and over
People aged 16 years or over, including people with severe immunocompromise and pregnant women, should have a booster dose three months or more after their primary course, to prolong their protection against COVID-19.
People aged 16 and over can have a booster dose of Pfizer. People aged 18 years and over can have a booster dose of Moderna.

How is the information you provide at your appointment used?
For information on how personal details are collected, stored and used you can visit www.health.gov.au/using-our-websites/privacy/privacy-notice-for-covid-19-vaccinations.

Consent
Parents may be asked to consent to their child being vaccinated. A special information resource and consent form has been developed for parents and guardians of children and is available here: www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-information-and-consent-form-for-parents-and-guardians-of-children-aged-5-to-11-years

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 at: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register/how-get-immunisation-history-statement.


Alternatively, you can check with your state or territory health authority about these laws: www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-contacts.