



Australian Government



COVID-19 vaccine information for children, teenagers, parents and guardians

Last updated: 29 April 2022

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

The Spikevax (Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine is approved and recommended for people aged 6 years and older.

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

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
- 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 Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not contain any live virus and cannot give you COVID-19. They work by helping your body to recognise the spike proteins of the virus and to fight the coronavirus that has these proteins.

What to expect after their vaccination

The vaccine starts to protect people against COVID-19 from about 2 to 3 weeks after the first dose. Most people need two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to get strong protection.

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

- 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. These are outlined in the table on the next page.

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

	Children's Comirnaty (Pfizer)	Comirnaty (Pfizer)	Spikevax (Moderna)	Spikevax (Moderna)
Age range	5 to 11 years	12 years and older	6 to 11 years	12 years and older
Dosage	Child dose (0.2ml after dilution)	Adolescent/ Adult dose (0.3ml after dilution)	Child dose (0.25ml)	Adolescent/ Adult dose (0.5ml)
Vial cap colour	Orange	Purple	Red	Red
Recommended interval between first and second dose	8 weeks ¹	8weeks ¹	8 weeks ¹	8 weeks ¹

¹ The vaccine interval can be shortened in special circumstances to a minimum of 3 weeks for Pfizer and 4 weeks for Moderna.

Remember their second appointment

It is important that your child gets two doses of the vaccine as the second dose will extend their protection against COVID-19.

The recommended interval between dose one and dose two is 8 weeks, but the interval between doses can be reduced to 3 weeks for Pfizer or 4 weeks for Moderna in some circumstances.

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 Pfizer or Moderna.

Do people who have had COVID-19 still need to be vaccinated?

If you have had COVID-19 and have recovered, you should still get your next COVID-19 vaccine dose to maintain your 'up to date' COVID-19 vaccination status. The virus that causes

COVID-19 is a new virus and experts do not know how long natural immunity lasts after the infection. It is very likely that protection from re-infection will reduce over time.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you should wait 3 months after infection before receiving your next COVID-19 vaccine dose.

Consent

Parents may be asked to consent to their child being vaccinated. A special information resource and consent form for each vaccine has been developed for parents and guardians of children. These are available here: www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-patient-resources#resources-for-5-to-11year-old-vaccination.

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.

More information

For more information about COVID-19 vaccines, visit www.health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines-languages or call the National Coronavirus Helpline on **1800 020 080**. Select option 8 for free interpreting services.