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COVID VACCINATION INFORMATION PACK

Valid as of 18th February 2022

We have compiled some information which will help our patients understand the risks and benefits of the COVID vaccination so that they are well informed to provide consent.

It is important that you read through this information BEFORE your vaccine appointment. If you have any questions, you need to discuss them BEFORE your vaccine appointment with your USUAL DOCTOR.

If you have already made an appointment but have concerns, then you should cancel your appointment until such a time that your questions are addressed by your USUAL DOCTOR.

You will be receiving the following vaccine:

- Pfizer Comirnaty Vaccine for ages 12 and over
- Pfizer Paediatric Comirnaty Vaccine for ages 5 to 11
- AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine
- Novavax Nuvaxovid COVID-19 Vaccine

YOUR VACCINE APPOINTMENT DATES

FIRST DOSE at Branch HAMPTON / MENTONE

DAY: _____ DATE: ____ / ____ / ____ : TIME: _____

SECOND DOSE at Branch HAMPTON / MENTONE

DAY: _____ DATE: ____ / ____ / ____ : TIME: _____

Preliminary Requirements

You must have a valid Medicare number in order for you to receive the vaccine at our practice. If you are an overseas visitor and do not have a Medicare number, you are still eligible to receive the vaccine but via other avenues.

Information for DVA Card holders

If you have a Veteran **Gold Card**, bring that.

If you have a Veteran **White Card**, bring your Medicare card as well.

If you have a Veteran **Orange Card**, just bring your Medicare card.

If you don't have a Medicare card and you don't **know** your Medicare number, phone Medicare on 132 011.

If you don't **have** a Medicare number, you can still get the COVID-19 vaccine. We recommend you call Medicare on 132 011 first, to check you are not enrolled with Medicare already. The staff member will help you to either enrol in Medicare or to apply for an Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI) if you don't already have one.

Even if you are not in Medicare, you will have an IHI if you get a DVA pension or benefit.

People who are not eligible for Medicare, for example a temporary resident, will need to attend a state- or territory-run vaccination clinic to get their COVID-19 vaccines.

You can find more information about getting an IHI at <https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/ihs> on the Services Australia website.

More information about this is below:

Services Australia - Get Ready for Your COVID-19 Vaccinations

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/news/get-ready-your-covid-19-vaccinations>

What Should I Do Before I Get Vaccinated for COVID-19 ?

<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines/what-should-i-do-before-i-get-vaccinated-for-covid-19>

Vaccine safety and reporting adverse events

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) assesses all vaccines in Australia. This ensures that in order for a vaccine to be approved it is safe, effective and manufactured to a very high quality standard. A description of the process for approval of COVID-19 vaccines is available on the [TGA website](https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-approval-process). (<https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-approval-process>)

The safety of COVID-19 vaccines will be monitored continuously throughout the COVID-19 vaccination program. Suspected side effects can be reported to your vaccination provider or other healthcare professional. They will then make a formal report on your behalf to your state or territory health department or directly to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

If you would prefer to report it yourself, please visit the [TGA website](https://www.tga.gov.au/reporting-suspected-side-effects-associated-covid-19-vaccine) (<https://www.tga.gov.au/reporting-suspected-side-effects-associated-covid-19-vaccine>) for information on how to report suspected side effects associated with COVID-19 vaccines.

People should discuss this information when considering the benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccination with their **usual doctor**.

AstraZeneca Vaccine Information

Approval for use in Australia

Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) is approved for use in people aged 18 years and over.

The TGA provisionally approved it for use in Australia on 15 February 2021.

The [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation](#) (ATAGI) recommends the AstraZeneca vaccine for people:

- **aged 60 and over**
- **aged 18 to 59 in outbreak areas**, if they do not have immediate access to Comirnaty (Pfizer) or Spikevax (Moderna).

If you are aged 18 to 59, you can choose to get protected with the AstraZeneca vaccine:

following an assessment by a qualified health professional

if you provide verbal or written consent.

In a large outbreak, ATAGI advises that the benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine are greater than the risk of rare side effects for all age groups. (<https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-response-to-nsw-covid-19-outbreak-24th-july-2021>)

Dose schedule

You need 2 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, given 4 to 12 weeks apart.

You may not be fully protected against COVID-19 until 7 to 14 days after your second dose.

Most people have their second dose 12 weeks after their first, but it can be less time in certain situations.

ATAGI recommends a shorter interval of 4 to 8 weeks between the first and second doses in an outbreak so that maximal protection against COVID-19 can be achieved earlier. (<https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-use-of-covid-19-vaccines-in-an-outbreak-setting>)

Find out more about booster doses (<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-your-vaccination/booster-doses>) for people aged 18 years and older and third doses for people with severe immunocompromise (<https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-the-use-of-a-3rd-primary-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine-in-individuals-who-are-severely-immunocompromised>) .

What's in the AstraZeneca vaccine

The AstraZeneca vaccine uses a harmless, weakened animal virus (called a viral vector) that contains the genetic code for the coronavirus spike protein. Once this enters the body, it tells your cells to make copies of the spike protein. Your immune cells then recognise the spike protein as a threat and begin building an immune response against it.

The AstraZeneca vaccine does not contain any live virus, and it cannot give you COVID-19.

You can read the full Vaxzevria Consumer Medicine Information document on the TGA site for more details (click 'I accept' to see the PDF) - <https://tga-search.clients.funnelback.com/s/search.html?query=vaxzevria&collection=tga-artg&profile=record>

Common side effects

As with any vaccine, you may have some temporary side effects after receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine. This shows your immune system is working.

Common side effects after the AstraZeneca vaccine include:

- injection site pain or tenderness
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- fever and chills.

Most side effects are mild and go away within 1 to 2 days. They are more common after the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

People who have had their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine without any serious adverse effects should have the second dose to gain full protection. This includes people under 60 years old.

Rare side effects

In rare cases, people may develop a specific type of blood clots after their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine. This is called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS). -

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/thrombosis-with-thrombocytopenia-syndrome-tts>

Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS)

TTS involves blood clots (thrombosis) together with low levels of blood platelets (thrombocytopenia). It is different from more common types of blood clots.

Symptoms of TTS most commonly develop 4 to 42 days after vaccination. See a doctor immediately if you develop any of the following symptoms:

- severe or persistent headache that does not go away after taking pain relief medication
- abdominal pain.

Read more in this fact sheet Information on COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine. (

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-information-on-vaxzevria-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine>)

Low risk of developing TTS

In Australia, the risk of developing TTS after a first dose of AstraZeneca is around 20 in a million.

The risk of dying from TTS after a first dose of AstraZeneca is less than 1 in a million.

The risk of dying if you catch COVID-19 is 42,000 in a million.

1 in a million is really rare. See how it compares at <https://www.science.org.au/curious/people-medicine/astrazeneca-vaccine-risk-death-1-million-what-does-mean> . You are more likely to be struck by lightning or die from taking daily aspirin than to die from TTS after vaccination with AstraZeneca.

Treatment for TTS

TTS can be treated very effectively and most people recover.

Fact sheets on TTS

There printable fact sheets on TTS at: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/patient-information-sheet-on-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-and-thrombosis-with-thrombocytopenia-syndrome-tts>

The Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre has a page on TTS that includes an explanatory video.

<https://mvec.mcri.edu.au/references/thrombosis-with-thrombocytopenia-syndrome/>

Injection technique unlikely to cause TTS

ATAGI does not consider injection technique to cause adverse events for several reasons.

- Most cases of TTS only happen after the first dose. If accidentally injecting into a blood vessel was a factor, cases would occur equally after both doses.
- Directly injecting into a blood vessel is unlikely in the recommended injection sites.
- TTS typically occurs some days or even weeks after vaccination. If it was caused by injecting into the blood stream instead of a muscle, it would occur much earlier.

Risks and benefits

The Delta variant has changed the risk/benefit profile of vaccination with AstraZeneca.

ATAGI recommends that in outbreak areas, everyone aged 18 years and above should strongly consider getting vaccinated with any available vaccine, including AstraZeneca.

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/ataqi-statement-response-to-nsw-covid-19-outbreak-24th-july-2021>

Use in particular groups

You can still get vaccinated with AstraZeneca if you have a:

- history of blood clots such as deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE)
- weakened immune system (immunocompromise)
- history of COVID-19 (but your doctor may advise you to wait for up to 6 months after recovery).

Pregnant women are offered Pfizer or Moderna as first choice, but can take AstraZeneca if the benefits outweigh the risks in their particular case.

Groups who should not have AstraZeneca

ATAGI has recommended some people not be vaccinated with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Contraindications to AstraZeneca are:

- anaphylaxis after a previous dose
- anaphylaxis to any component of the vaccine, including polysorbate 80
- history of capillary leak syndrome
- thrombosis with thrombocytopenia occurring after a previous dose
- any other serious adverse event, that following review by an experienced immunisation provider or medical specialist was attributed to a previous dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

ATAGI have also advised that people with a history of one of the following specific blood conditions should not receive the AstraZeneca vaccine:

- cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST)
- heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)
- idiopathic splanchnic (mesenteric, portal and splenic) venous thrombosis
- anti-phospholipid syndrome with thrombosis.

Patient information

More patient resources including fact sheets about the AstraZeneca vaccine and what to expect after your shot. May be found at this link - <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-patient-resources>

Pfizer Comirnaty Vaccine Information

Approval for use in Australia

Comirnaty (Pfizer) is approved for use in people aged 5 years and over.

The TGA provisionally approved Pfizer for use in Australia on 25 January 2021 (for 16 years and over), 22 July 2021 (for 12 years and over) and 5 December 2021 (for 5 years and over).

The Pfizer vaccine is currently available for all people aged 5 years and over.

Appointments for children aged 5 to 11 years start from 10 January.

Dose schedule

People aged 12 years and older need 2 doses of the Pfizer vaccine, given between 3 and 6 weeks apart.

Children aged 5 to 11 years need 2 doses of Pfizer for children (one third the adult dose), given 8 weeks apart unless advised by a medical professional.

You may not be fully protected against COVID-19 until 7 to 14 days after your second dose.

Find out more about booster doses at <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-your-vaccination/booster-doses> for people aged 18 years and older and third doses at <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-the-use-of-a-3rd-primary-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine-in-individuals-who-are-severely-immunocompromised> for people aged 12 years and older with severe immunocompromise.

What's in the Pfizer vaccine

Pfizer is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. This type of vaccine uses a genetic code called RNA to make your body's cells produce the coronavirus' specific spike protein.

Your immune system cells then recognise the spike protein as a threat and begin building an immune response against it. The RNA from the vaccine does not change your DNA in any way, and your body quickly breaks it down.

Pfizer does not contain any live virus and it cannot give you COVID-19.

This video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4sUuFBEo2g>) from John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health explains how mRNA vaccines work.

You can read the full Comirnaty (Pfizer) Consumer Medicine Information document on the TGA site for more details (click 'I accept' to see the PDF) at <https://tga-search.clients.funnelback.com/s/search.html?query=Pfizer+COMIRNATY&collection=tga-artg&profile=record>

Pfizer vaccine for 5 to 11 year olds

On 5 December 2021, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) provisionally approved the Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 years .

The TGA's provisional approval of Pfizer for children was based on a careful evaluation of available data to support its safety and efficacy among this age group.

Vaccinating children can help protect children from getting COVID-19. It can also help prevent children passing the virus onto younger siblings, parents, grandparents and the wider community.

The paediatric vaccine dose of Pfizer for children is one third of the dose for people aged 12 and over.

Children aged 5 to 11 years will receive a 2-dose primary course of vaccination, given between 8 weeks apart.

Parents, carers and guardians can book appointments starting from 10 January 2022. If you can't find an appropriate appointment, please check back regularly as more appointments will become available.

Common side effects

As with any vaccine, you may have some temporary side effects after receiving Pfizer. This shows your immune system is working.

Common side effects after Pfizer include:

- injection site pain or swelling
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle or joint pain
- fever and chills.

Most side effects are mild and go away within 1 to 2 days. [AusVaxSafety data](#) shows that side effects are more common after the second dose.

Rare side effects

Myocarditis or pericarditis in young people

In rare cases, myocarditis (inflammation of the heart) and pericarditis (inflammation of the membrane around the heart) can develop after vaccination with Pfizer.

Most cases have mild symptoms and recover well.

The TGA reports that these rare effects on the heart typically occur:

- within 10 days of vaccination
- after the second dose
- more often in men aged under 30.

Contact a doctor or go to hospital immediately if you develop any of the following symptoms after a Pfizer vaccination:

- chest pain
- pressure or discomfort in the chest
- irregular, skipped heartbeats or 'fluttering'
- fainting
- shortness of breath
- pain when breathing.

Low risk of developing myocarditis or pericarditis

The risk of developing myocarditis or pericarditis is very low.

In the US, reported rates in males were 10 cases per million after first doses, and 67 cases per million after second doses. The TGA is monitoring the risk in the Australian population.

The risk in children aged 5 to 11 years is not yet known. The clinical trial in children aged 5 to 11 years did not have enough participants to assess rates of myocarditis or pericarditis following the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, but no specific safety concerns have been identified so far from millions of doses of this vaccine administered overseas to children aged 5 to 11 years. The benefits of vaccination outweigh this very rare risk, and vaccination is still recommended for all eligible age groups.

Fact sheets

Fact sheets are available at the following links

- Guidance on myocarditis and pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 vaccines
<https://tga-search.clients.funnelback.com/s/search.html?query=Pfizer+COMIRNATY&collection=tga-artg&profile=record>
- The Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre has a page on myocarditis and pericarditis that includes an explanatory video
<https://tga-search.clients.funnelback.com/s/search.html?query=Pfizer+COMIRNATY&collection=tga-artg&profile=record>

Injection technique unlikely to cause myocarditis

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) does not consider injection technique to cause adverse events because most myocarditis cases occur after the second dose. If accidentally injecting into a blood vessel was a factor, cases would occur equally after both doses.

Risks and benefits

The benefits of vaccination with Pfizer greatly outweigh the risk of side effects.

COVID-19 will be with us for many years into the future.

Getting vaccinated now has many benefits, including:

- protecting yourself against severe illness and death from COVID-19
- preventing complications such as 'long COVID' (<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/long-term-effects-of-covid-19-language-english>)
- protecting people who can't be vaccinated due to medical conditions
- slowing the spread of the virus
- keeping hospitalisation rates at a level our health system can cope with
- reducing the need for lockdowns and school closures in the future (when enough Australians are vaccinated)
- being able to attend events and travel in the future.

People who are not recommended to have the Pfizer vaccine

It's not recommended that you have the Pfizer vaccine if you have had:

- a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of the vaccine
- anaphylaxis after exposure to any component of the vaccine, including polyethylene glycol (PEG)
- myocarditis and/or pericarditis attributed to a previous dose of the vaccine
- any other serious adverse event attributed to a previous dose of the vaccine.

Patient information

Patient resources including fact sheets about Pfizer and what to expect after your shot may be found at the following link

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-patient-resources>

Novavax Nuvaxovid Vaccine Information

Approval for use in Australia

Nuvaxovid (Novavax) is approved for use in people aged 18 years and over. The TGA provisionally approved Novavax for use in Australia on 20 January 2022. The Novavax vaccine is currently available for all people aged 18 years and over.

Dose schedule

You need 2 doses of the Novavax vaccine, given at least 3 weeks apart. You may not be fully protected against COVID-19 until 7 to 14 days after your second dose.

What's in the Novavax vaccine

Novavax is a protein-based vaccine. This type of vaccine contains part of the coronavirus spike protein. Your immune system cells recognise the spike protein as a threat and begin building an immune response against it.

The Novavax vaccine also has an ingredient called the Matrix-M adjuvant. This helps create a stronger immune response to the vaccine.

Novavax does not contain any live virus and it cannot give you COVID-19.

You can read the full Nuvaxovid (Novavax) Consumer Medicine Information document on the TGA site for more details (click 'I accept' to see the PDF) - <https://www.tga.gov.au/sites/default/files/novavax-cmi.pdf> .

Common side effects

As with any vaccine, you may have some temporary side effects after receiving the Novavax vaccine. This shows your immune system is working.

Common side effects after Novavax include:

- injection site pain or tenderness
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle or joint pain
- generally feeling unwell.

Most side effects are mild and go away within 1 to 2 days.

Rare side effects

Rare side effects after the Novavax vaccine are severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

We don't yet know if there are any other rare side effects after Novavax vaccine. This is because only relatively small numbers of people have received this vaccine worldwide. More information will be available over time.

People who are not recommended to have the Novavax vaccine

It's not recommended that you have the Novavax vaccine if you have had:

- a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of the vaccine
- anaphylaxis after exposure to any component of the vaccine, including polysorbate 80
- any other serious adverse event attributed to a previous dose of the vaccine.

Patient information

Patient resources include fact sheets about the Novavax vaccine and what to expect after your shot are at this link:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-patient-resources#resources-for-nuvaxovid-novavax-vaccine>

Vaccine Side Effects

You may experience minor side effects following your vaccination against COVID-19. Most side effects last no more than a couple of days and you should recover without any problems.

Common reactions to any vaccine include:

- pain, redness or swelling at the injection site
- mild fever
- nausea

Serious reactions, such as allergic reactions, are extremely rare. If you have any concerns about a vaccine, ask your usual doctor.

Any injectable vaccine can also cause an allergic reaction in some people.

Contact your healthcare provider immediately or go straight to the emergency department at your nearest hospital if you notice any of these symptoms of an allergic reaction:

- rash, itching or hives on the skin
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body
- shortness of breath, wheezing or difficulty breathing
- fainting, dizziness, feeling lightheaded (due to a drop in blood pressure)

After you have received medical advice for any side effects that you experience, you can report them to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) at <https://www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems>. By reporting side effects, you're helping provide more information on the safety of vaccines.

Be sure to tell your doctor that you have recently received the vaccine. For symptoms which are not urgent, you can see your regular healthcare provider (usually your GP).

You can also tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects like a sore arm, headache, fever or something else. If you have a side effect that worries you, please call your doctor.

Use the [COVID-19 vaccine side effects symptom checker \(https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-side-effect-checker\)](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-side-effect-checker) if you have concerns about any symptoms after your vaccine. The checker is also available through the National Coronavirus Helpline, [1800 020 080](tel:1800020080), 24 hours a day.

More information may be found at this link:

<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines/what-happens-after-i-am-vaccinated-for-covid-19>

If you believe that you may have a side effect, you may report this directly to the TGA. More information regarding reporting is found at these links

Victorian Surveillance of Adverse Effects following Vaccination in the Community (SAEFVIC)

<https://www.safevac.org.au/Home/Info/VIC>

Report directly to the TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration)

<https://www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems>

Report to the NPS MedicineWise Adverse Medicine Events line

Consumers can make a report and obtain advice from a pharmacist by calling the NPS MedicineWise Adverse Medicine Events line on 1300 134 237 (8am-8pm seven days a week)

Eligibility for the Vaccine

Updated information on who is eligible to receive the vaccine may be found at these links

<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/when-will-i-get-a-covid-19-vaccine>

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/who-can-get-vaccinated>

Patients who are eligible may also access the COVID-19 vaccines via one of the state-run vaccination hubs.

State-run vaccination centres are listed at this web address:

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccination-centres>

You may check your eligibility using this online tool

<https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility>

Book Your Appointment

We recommend that you book your appointment online by visiting our website and clicking on the relevant link.

We have created a COVID Vaccination page which contains the information in this handout as well as a booking button

<https://myhealth.baysidemedicalgroup.com.au>

We also have capacity to book online via our web page for each site

Hampton - <https://myhealth.net.au/hampton/booking/>

Mentone - <https://myhealth.net.au/mentone/booking/>

If you do not have any access to a computer to book online, then you must attend in person to book your appointment.

When You Attend

You should arrive 5-10 minutes before your allocated time and check in with the reception desk.

We ask that you observe the necessary physical distancing in our practice and you are required to wear a face mask as a condition of entry to our premises.

For children being vaccinated we ask that only one parent/guardian attends with the child being vaccinated and anyone else not requiring vaccination to wait outside the premises.

After you arrive, you will be given some reading material about the vaccine.

After Your Vaccine

After your vaccine, you will be required to wait at least 15 minutes to ensure any immediate adverse reactions are managed by us on site.

We advise that you should book your appointment via our online process for the second dose which should occur at:

- 3 to 6 weeks after your first {Pfiozer vaccine if you are aged 12 or over OR
- 8 weeks after your first Pfizer vaccine if you are aged 5 to 11 OR
- 8 to 12 weeks after your first AstraZeneca vaccine

This may be again accessed via this link <https://myhealth.baysidemedicalgroup.com.au> or via our practice website.

Some people may still get COVID-19 after vaccination. So you must still follow public health precautions as required in your state or territory to stop the spread of COVID-19 including:

- keep your distance – stay at least 1.5 metres away from other people
- washing your hands often with soap and water, or use hand sanitiser
- wear a mask, if your state or territory has advised you should
- stay home if you are unwell with cold or flu-like symptoms and arrange to get a COVID-19 test.

Proof of Vaccination

You can get an immunisation history statement or COVID-19 digital certificate to show proof of your vaccinations.

How you get proof depends on your situation. This includes if you need to create a myGov account or link services, or enrol in Medicare.

If you're 14 or older, you'll need to get your own immunisation history statement or digital certificate using either your:

[Medicare online account](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts) (<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts>) through myGov

[Express Plus Medicare mobile app](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/express-plus-medicare-mobile-app).

(<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/express-plus-medicare-mobile-app>)

If you're not eligible for Medicare, you can still get your immunisation history statement online through [myGov](#).

More information at this link:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/getting-help-during-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-vaccinations/how-get-proof-your-covid-19-vaccinations>

COVID-19 testing after vaccination

Some side effects from COVID-19 vaccination might be similar to symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever). However, COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca does not contain any live SARS-CoV-2 virus and cannot cause COVID-19. You may not need to get a COVID-19 test or isolate:

- if you develop general symptoms like fever, headache or tiredness in the first two days after vaccination, and
- if you are sure that you don't have any respiratory symptoms (e.g. runny nose, cough, sore throat, loss of smell or loss of taste).

However, you should check the current guidelines in your state/territory for the most up-to-date information. This advice may change in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in your local area. You may still need to get a COVID-19 test if you meet other criteria, for example if you are a close contact of a known COVID-19 case. If in doubt, seek medical assessment.

Booster doses

Third and fourth dose for people with severe immune deficiency

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) have made a recommendation on 7 October 2021 that all people aged 5 and over with a **severe immune deficiency** have a **third COVID-19 vaccination dose** to **complete their primary immunisation**.

This is to address the risk of suboptimal or non-response to the two dose schedule in this group.

This third primary dose is NOT to be considered a booster dose for the general population. It is a third dose – to complete the regular course of vaccination – for a very specific cohort of vulnerable people to ensure they have the highest level of protection available against COVID-19.

The third dose should occur 2 - 6 months after the second dose.

People aged **18 years or older** who received a 3-dose primary course due to severe immunocompromise are now recommended to receive a booster (4th) dose more than 4 months after their third dose.

An mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) is recommended for the third dose but AstraZeneca may be used if the first two doses were AstraZeneca

ATAGI have provided specific guidelines to medical practitioners regarding suitability criteria for a third dose.

This includes people with

- Blood cancer or Cancer patients on active treatment with Chemotherapy or Radiotherapy
- Immune Suppressant Treatments (**While receiving the first two vaccine doses**) eg For some Rheumatological conditions and high dose steroids. This includes but is not limited to the following treatments; Mycophenolate, Methotrexate, Leflunomide, Azathioprine, 6 Mercaptopurine, Cyclophosphamide, Chlorambucil, Cyclosporin, Tacrolimus, Fingolimod, Alemtuzamab, Eculizumab, Abatacept, High dose Prednisolone (more than 20mg daily) or Dexamethasone.
- Stem cell transplant patients
- Organ Transplant patients taking immune suppressants
- Patients on Dialysis
- Other patients eg HIV and other Primary immune deficiency disorders

The practice has dedicated vaccine clinic time for patients in this category.

Detailed information on the criteria from ATAGI may be found at this link

: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-the-use-of-a-3rd-primary-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine-in-individuals-who-are-severely-immunocompromised>

Please note: If a person's immunosuppressive therapy was commenced more than two weeks AFTER their second vaccine dose then a third dose is not required because the immune response to the vaccine is considered adequate.

If you believe that you are eligible for this third dose then please book a **Telehealth consult** with your GP either via our website or via the MyPractice Phone App. This consultation will be bulk-billed if it is solely to discuss your vaccine eligibility for the third dose.

We strongly recommend that your specific medical requirements are properly discussed before proceeding with this third dose of vaccine. During your telehealth appointment, your doctor will book your vaccine appointment time once satisfied that the necessary criteria are met and that it is safe for you to proceed to have the third dose.

Booster dose for people aged over 18

You are eligible for a COVID-19 booster dose if:

- you are 18 years and older, and
- have had your second dose of your primary dose course of COVID-19 vaccination **at least 3 months ago**.

Booster doses are not mandatory, however they are recommended to maintain immunity against COVID-19.

A booster dose increases your protection against:

- infection with the virus that causes COVID-19
- severe disease
- dying from COVID-19.

A booster dose will continue to protect you, your loved ones and your community against COVID-19.

Booster doses will be free for everyone.

Booster doses are available to everyone 18 years and over who have had both doses of their primary course of a COVID-19 vaccine at least 3 months ago.

Read ATAGI's advice on [COVID-19 booster doses](https://www.health.gov.au/news/booster-doses-of-covid-19-vaccines-recommended-for-people-aged-18-and-over) at this link - <https://www.health.gov.au/news/booster-doses-of-covid-19-vaccines-recommended-for-people-aged-18-and-over>

Vaccine types for booster doses

The Corminaty (Pfizer) vaccine is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and recommended by ATAGI as a COVID-19 booster dose.

You can have the Pfizer vaccine as a booster dose regardless of which vaccine you had for your first 2 doses.

You can also receive the Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) vaccine if you:

can't have the Pfizer vaccine for medical reasons

had 2 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine previously.

Read [ATAGI's advice](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-recommendations-on-the-use-of-a-booster-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine) on the type of vaccine recommended for booster doses at this link - <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-recommendations-on-the-use-of-a-booster-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine>.

AusVaxSafety's ACTIVE follow-up after your COVID-19 vaccination

What is AusVaxSafety?

AusVaxSafety is a national system for monitoring vaccine safety in Australia. The system is led by the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS). It is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

AusVaxSafety monitoring vaccine safety of COVID-19 vaccines

In partnership with the Australian state and territory health departments, AusVaxSafety is following up people who receive a COVID-19 vaccine by sending them an SMS or email with a short survey that asks if they experienced any adverse event following vaccination.

How does it work?



These surveys give you the opportunity to report any adverse events you have after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Depending on your survey responses, your state/territory health department or immunisation provider may call you to collect more details.

What happens to the information you provide?

Survey responses will contribute to the national COVID-19 vaccine safety surveillance that AusVaxSafety is conducting.

What about your personal data?

AusVaxSafety only receives responses that are 'de-identified' to protect your privacy. This means any information that could identify you or your child will be removed.