

Frequently asked questions: Parents/ legal guardians (children aged 5 to 11)

All South Australians aged 5 and over are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. The COVID-19 vaccine is a safe and effective way to protect your family from COVID-19.

WHEN CAN MY CHILD GET VACCINATED?

Children aged 5 to 11 can get the paediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine from 10 January 2022.

WHAT VACCINE WILL MY CHILD RECEIVE?

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends the paediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11.

This COVID-19 vaccine is a third of the dose given to those aged 12 and over.

WHERE CAN MY CHILD GET VACCINATED?

The paediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is available for children aged 5 to 11 at most SA Health vaccination clinics (not including mobile clinics), and selected GPs, Respiratory Clinics and pharmacies.

DO I NEED TO PROVIDE CONSENT FOR MY CHILD TO GET VACCINATED?

Yes. Children aged 5 to 11 require consent from a parent or legal guardian to be vaccinated and must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian to the appointment.

HOW MANY VACCINES DOES MY CHILD NEED?

Two doses of vaccine are required to be fully protected from COVID-19. Your child will receive two doses of the vaccine, 8 weeks apart. The timing between vaccines can be shortened to a minimum of 3 weeks in special circumstances.

IS THE PAEDIATRIC PFIZER COVID-19 VACCINE SAFE FOR CHILDREN?

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) provisionally approved the paediatric Pfizer vaccine for children aged 5 to 11. This was based on a careful evaluation of available data to support its safety and efficacy among this age group.

The paediatric Pfizer vaccine has been approved by the TGA for children aged 5 to 11 years and is one third of the dose given to those aged 12 and over. Both Pfizer vaccines are the same safe and effective vaccine.

HOW WILL I KNOW MY CHILD HAS BEEN GIVEN THE CORRECT DOSE?

The paediatric Pfizer vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 will be in different packaging to the current vaccines. The vaccine will be in an orange-capped vial instead of a grey or purple capped vial. You will also receive a record confirming the details of the COVID-19 vaccine your child has received.

HOW DOES THE VACCINE WORK?

Vaccines work by teaching your child's body to fight the illness so that they don't become as sick or their symptoms aren't as bad if they do get sick. This also means they are less likely to pass COVID-19 onto other people.

MY CHILD IS 5 TO 11 AND HAS AN UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITION OR DISABILITY, CAN THEY BE VACCINATED?

If your child has an underlying medical condition or disability, you should discuss vaccination with their treating doctor or specialist. Your doctor or specialist may decide your child requires further review or they may need an appointment at the Paediatric COVID-19 Specialist Immunisation Service at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

If this is the case, your treating doctor will need to complete a referral form and you will be contacted directly by the Women's and Children's vaccination clinic for an appointment.

A [comprehensive list of conditions](#) is available online.

WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED TO GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

Overseas, an increase in transmission of the COVID-19 virus is occurring in schools and more frequently in younger children.

COVID-19 in young children is generally mild, however it is possible that your child could become severely ill and have long term effects if they catch COVID-19.

Children with pre-existing conditions are at a greater risk of severe disease from COVID-19, including children with type 1 diabetes, obesity, a history of prematurity, heart disease, immunocompromising conditions, and complex and chronic illnesses.

Vaccination is the best way to reduce your child's risk of becoming seriously unwell with COVID-19 and to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Vaccinated people are less infectious if they do catch COVID-19, which means getting vaccinated is the best way you can protect your child and your family.

HOW DO I EXPLAIN THE COVID-19 VACCINE TO MY CHILD?

It's natural for your child to be curious and to have lots of questions about COVID-19 vaccinations. It may be helpful to start a conversation with your child about the vaccines.

It's important to listen to them and acknowledge and reassure any fears they have about needles or being vaccinated.

Be honest and explain in an age-appropriate way the facts about the COVID-19 vaccine. Remember children take emotional cues from adults, so oversharing fears may not be constructive and may make your child feel uncomfortable or scared.

It may help to explain to your child what they can expect on the day of the appointment, including that the doctor or medical professional will ask them some questions. They will need to put the needle into the top of their arm, it will feel like a small prick and their arm might be a bit sore afterwards. Reassure your child that it's normal for their arm to be a bit sore.

If your child seems anxious about getting vaccinated, try exploring their feelings further or seek further advice from your GP if necessary.

WILL MY CHILD HAVE SIDE EFFECTS FROM THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

Vaccines, like any other medication or natural therapy, can cause reactions or side effects. The extent and severity of side effects from the COVID-19 vaccines are similar to those from other vaccines. As part of regulatory assessment of all vaccines, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) considers possible side effects. The benefits must outweigh the risks for a vaccine to be registered for use in Australia.

Your child might experience some side effects after their vaccine, but these are usually mild and only last for a couple of days. Side effects can include pain, redness or swelling at the injection site, a headache, general muscle aches and pain, or a fever. These are common and expected reactions.

Reactions or side effects, such as fever and tiredness, from vaccines are often a sign that your child's immune system has been activated and is learning how to fight the virus. If you have concerns about your child after they receive their vaccine, you can use the [COVID-19 Vaccine Side Effect Checker](#) or speak with your GP.

ARE THERE ANY RARE SIDE EFFECTS?

There are rare side effects linked to the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (full dose), including myocarditis and pericarditis, however these are extremely rare in children under the age of 15.

Myocarditis is inflammation of the heart muscle while pericarditis is inflammation of the lining around the heart. There are many potential causes of myocarditis and pericarditis, including as a complication in people who are infected with COVID-19 or some other viruses.

The benefits of protection against COVID-19 far outweigh the risks from rare and generally mild side effects. Effects on the heart from COVID-19 infection are much more common and usually more severe than with rare effects from vaccination. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) reaffirms that the benefits of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine outweigh these rare risks.

As with all COVID-19 vaccines, the TGA will continue to monitor the safety of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and update recommendations as needed.

For more information, see the [Guidance on Myocarditis and Pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines fact sheet](#).

The immunisation provider will discuss the side effects and can answer any questions you have at your child's appointment.

HOW DO I BOOK AN APPOINTMENT FOR MY CHILD?

You can book an appointment for your child's first and second dose at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidvaccine.

WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED FOR THEIR COVID-19 VACCINATION APPOINTMENT?

If your child is listed on your Medicare card, you will need to bring the card to the appointment. If your child is not listed on your card or does not have Medicare, you will need to bring a form of photo ID.

It's important to make sure your details are up to date with Medicare. You can do this through your online account on MyGov, on the Express Medicare Plus App, or you can call Medicare on 132011.

WILL MY CHILD GET A RECORD OF THEIR VACCINATION?

Yes. You can get your child's immunisation history statement or COVID-19 digital certificate to show proof of your vaccinations using:

- > Medicare online account through myGov
- > Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

If you're not eligible for Medicare, you can request an Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI) to get an immunisation summary through myGov.

For more information, visit the [Services Australia website](#).

WILL MY CHILD REQUIRE A BOOSTER VACCINATION?

Booster doses are currently only recommended for people aged 18 and over.

HOW LONG DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO WAIT BETWEEN RECEIVING THE COVID-19 VACCINE AND ANOTHER TYPE OF VACCINE?

The COVID-19 vaccine and the influenza (flu vaccine) can be administered on the same day.

The recommended minimum interval between other vaccines and a dose of COVID-19 vaccine is 7 days either side. This can be shortened (including same day administration) in special circumstances.

Consider this timing if your child is getting other vaccinations. Speak to your GP or vaccine provider for more information.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MY CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OLD?

Vaccinated people are less infectious if they do catch COVID-19, which means getting vaccinated is the best way you can protect your child and your family.

It is important that we continue practising good hygiene and physical distancing, using the COVID Safe Check-In, and getting tested and staying home if unwell to protect the community and younger children.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccines, visit the [Australian Government Department of Health](#) website, which also has a range of [translated information](#).

For information about the use of the COVID-19 vaccines in South Australia, visit www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidvaccine or call the SA COVID-19 Information Line 1800 253 787.

For answers to general questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, read our [COVID-19 vaccine frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#).

For more information

SA COVID-19 Information Line 1800 253 787
covidvaccine.sa.gov.au



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