

Frequently asked questions: Parents and caregivers

All South Australians aged 12 and over are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. The COVID-19 vaccine is a safe way to protect you and your children from getting sick.

Research from around the world has shown that Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective for children aged 12 and over.

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

COVID-19 affects people of all ages and can be a serious illness for anyone who gets it, including people who are young.

Vaccination is the best way to minimise potential outbreaks and school closures, and to protect you and your child from getting sick.

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

WHAT CONSIDERATIONS ARE MADE WHEN DECIDING VACCINE ELIGIBILITY FOR THOSE AGED 12 TO 15?

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for people aged 12 and over in Australia.

ATAGI developed these recommendations by carefully considering the benefits, risks and evidence of vaccination for adolescents. This included:

- > safety, efficacy and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in adolescents from clinical trials and overseas vaccination programs
- > epidemiology of COVID-19 in adolescents including disease severity and complications, and their role in transmission in the population
- > safety of COVID-19 vaccines, including risk of myocarditis and pericarditis after receiving mRNA vaccines in adolescents and young adults reported overseas.

ARE THE PFIZER AND MODERNA COVID-19 VACCINES SAFE FOR CHILDREN?

Yes. Evidence from clinical trials of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine found that the vaccine was 100% effective for children aged 12 to 15 years (7 days after the second dose). The immune response was higher in this group of participants than those aged 16 to 25. The trial found no vaccine-related serious adverse events.

Based on this evidence, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) granted provisional registration for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to be administered to anyone aged 12 and over (previously 16+).

The TGA has also provisionally approved the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for people aged 12 years and older. Clinical trials found that for children aged 12 to 17 years, those who had Moderna were around 93% less likely to have COVID-19 symptoms than people who did not get the vaccine.

MY CHILD IS 12 TO 15 AND HAS AN UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITION OR DISABILITY, CAN THEY BE VACCINATED?

If your child is aged 12 to 15 and 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 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.

Speak to your child's treating doctor or specialist if they are on National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and/or living with disability requiring frequent assistance with activities of daily living, including down syndrome, muscular dystrophy, traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, and severe intellectual disability, or have any of the following underlying medical conditions:

- > Children with complex chronic disease
- > Cancers and haematological diseases (currently or in the past)
- > Transplant recipients
- > Chronic inflammatory conditions
- > Immunodeficiency conditions
- > Chronic kidney, liver, lung or neurological conditions or diabetes
- > Severe obesity
- > Heart disease and blood pressure disorders
- > Severe mental health conditions
- > Pregnant people.

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

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

If your child is aged 12 to 15, you must fill out a consent form for them to get their vaccine and you must attend their vaccination appointment at an SA Health vaccination clinic, GP, Respiratory Clinic or Pharmacy.

If your child is aged 16 and over, they do not need your consent and can complete their own consent form at an SA Health vaccination clinic, GP, Respiratory Clinic or Pharmacy.

If your child is aged 12 to 18 and getting vaccinated at school, you will need to sign a consent card and return it to the school. You do not need to attend their appointment.

DO I NEED TO ATTEND MY CHILD'S VACCINATION APPOINTMENT?

If your child is aged 12 to 15, you must attend your child's vaccination appointment at an SA Health vaccination clinic, GP, Respiratory Clinic or Pharmacy.

If your child is aged 16 and over, they can attend the appointment by themselves, but you can attend if they would like you to.

If your child is aged 12 to 18 and getting vaccinated at school, you will need to sign a consent card and return it to the school. You do not need to attend their appointment.

WHAT VACCINE WILL MY CHILD GET?

All children aged 12 and over can get the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

WHERE CAN MY CHILD GET VACCINATED?

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is available for people aged 12 and over at SA Health vaccination clinics, and selected GPs and Respiratory Clinics. Some schools are providing the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to their students.

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is available for people aged 12 and over at selected pharmacies.

HOW MANY VACCINES DOES MY CHILD NEED?

Two doses of vaccine are required to be fully protected from COVID-19. Pfizer doses are given 3 weeks apart and Moderna doses are given 4 weeks apart.

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

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 may experience minor reactions or side effects following vaccination. Most reactions or side effects last no more than a couple of days and do not require special treatment. Serious reactions like allergic reactions are extremely rare.

Common reactions to the COVID-19 vaccines include:

- > tenderness, pain and swelling at the injection site
- > tiredness
- > headache
- > muscle and joint pain
- > chills
- > fever

Some people may also experience redness or itching at the injection site, nausea, pain in the limb, enlarged lymph nodes, difficulty sleeping or generally feeling unwell.

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. You can use the [COVID-19 Vaccine Side Effect Checker](#) if you have concerns about your child after having either of the COVID-19 vaccines.

ARE THERE ANY RARE SIDE EFFECTS?

Very rare and generally mild cases of myocarditis and pericarditis have been observed following vaccination with mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.

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 and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines and update recommendations as needed.

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

HOW DO I BOOK AN APPOINTMENT FOR MY CHILD?

You or your child can book an appointment for their first and second dose at covidvaccine.sa.gov.au.

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

If your child has a Medicare card, they will need to bring the card to their appointment. If you are attending the appointment with them and have a Medicare card, you can bring this with you. If your child does not have Medicare, 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.

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

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 through the School Immunisation Program. Speak to your GP or vaccine provider for more information.

WILL MY CHILD GET A RECORD OF THEIR VACCINATION?

Anyone aged 14 years or older has to access their own immunisation history statement or COVID-19 digital certificate statement. If your child is aged 12 to 13 you can access their statement for them.

This can be done through:

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

People aged 14 years or older can give Services Australia permission for their parent/s or caregiver/s to access their immunisation history statement.

If your child is not eligible for Medicare, you or your child can request an Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI) to get an immunisation summary through myGov.

For more information, visit www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/covidvaccineproof.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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

For information about the use of the COVID-19 vaccines in South Australia, visit covidvaccine.sa.gov.au 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

