



Australian Government



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

Last updated: 10 December 2021

The Cominaty (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 will start from 10 January 2022.

Why should children and teens get vaccinated?

There are lots of reasons for young people 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.

If you have any concerns about symptoms you can get more information at www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-side-effect-checker.

Which vaccine will my child 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:

	Pfizer Paediatric	Comirnaty (Pfizer)	Spikevax (Moderna)
Age range	5 to 11 years	12 years and older	12 years and older
Dosage	Smaller dose (0.2ml after dilution)	Adult dose (0.3ml after dilution)	Adult dose (0.5ml after dilution)
Vial cap colour	Orange	Purple or grey	Red

Recommended interval between first and second dose	8 weeks ¹	3 to 6 weeks	4 to 6 weeks
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1. The vaccine interval can be shortened to a minimum of three weeks in special circumstances.

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

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 new consent form has been developed for children 'available shortly'.

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

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

More information about consent is available in the Australian Immunisation Handbook at: immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccination-procedures/preparing-for-vaccination.

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