**COVID-19 vaccines**

**Banner**

Effective COVID-19 vaccines are free for everyone in Australia. This includes people without a Medicare card, overseas visitors, international students, migrant workers and asylum seekers.

Getting vaccinated will help protect you, your family and your community from COVID-19.

**On this page**

This page has information about Australia’s COVID-19 vaccine program. You can also find videos, audio files and fact sheets in your language.

**Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine? How can I book an appointment?**

COVID-19 vaccines are free for everyone in Australia, even if you are not an Australian citizen or permanent resident. This includes people without a Medicare card, overseas visitors, international students, migrant workers and asylum seekers.

Everyone in Australia aged 12 years and over can book their vaccination now.

You can get a COVID-19 vaccine at:

* Commonwealth vaccination clinics
* participating general practices
* Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Services
* state and territory vaccination clinics, and
* participating pharmacies.

To find your nearest vaccination clinic and book your vaccination, use the [clinic finder](https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility?lang=en). If you need phone or on-site interpreting at your vaccine appointment, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

**If you don’t have a Medicare card**

If you don’t have a Medicare card, you can get your free vaccination at:

* Commonwealth vaccinations clinics,
* state or territory vaccination clinics, or
* participating pharmacies

General practitioners cannot charge you for the vaccine.

**Getting proof of your COVID-19 vaccination**

The Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) is a national immunisation register which records vaccines given to all people in Australia. This includes COVID-19 vaccines, vaccines given under the National Immunisation Program, and privately administered vaccines, such as for seasonal influenza or travel.

**How can you access your Immunisation History Statement?**  
You can access your Immunisation History Statement:

* online, by setting up your own [myGov account](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/online-help/create-mygov-account) and then accessing your [Medicare online account](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts), or
* through the [Express Plus Medicare mobile app](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/express-plus-medicare-mobile-app).

If you do not have a Medicare card, or do not have access to a myGov account, you can access your Immunisation History Statement by:

* asking your vaccination provider to print a copy for you; or
* by calling the Australian Immunisation Register enquiries line on 1800 653 809 (8am-5pm Monday to Friday AEST) and asking them to send your statement to you in the mail. It can take up to 14 days to arrive in the mail.

For more information on how to get proof of your COVID-19 vaccinations, see the [Services Australia website](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/getting-help-during-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-vaccinations/how-get-proof).

**Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning pregnancy**

Pregnant women are encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Women trying to get pregnant, or breastfeeding, can also safely have the vaccine.

If a pregnant woman contracts COVID-19, they are at a higher risk of severe illness. Their unborn baby is also at risk of being born prematurely or needing hospital treatment. This is why COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all pregnant women.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) and the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommend that pregnant women be offered the Pfizer (Comirnaty) or Spikevax (Moderna) vaccine at any stage of pregnancy.

**If you have a disability**

Some people with disability have more risk of becoming very sick with COVID-19.  [More information is available](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/information-for-people-with-disability-about-covid-19-vaccines) about how people with disability can get vaccinated.

**How do vaccines work?**

Vaccines are medicines that protect you against specific diseases. They train your immune system to remember and fight the germ (a virus or bacteria) that causes that disease. The COVID-19 vaccine is delivered by a trained health professional by a needle into the arm.

Vaccines are a safe way to strengthen your immune system without causing illness. After two doses of vaccine, if you do catch the disease, it is likely the illness will be less severe.

To keep you and your community safe before, and after vaccination, it is important to:

* stay 1.5 metres away from other people. Avoid handshakes and physical contact with people outside your household
* stay home if you feel unwell and get tested for COVID-19. You must stay at home until your results come back
* wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or use hand sanitiser, and
* cough or sneeze into your arm or a tissue. Put the tissue in the bin straight away.

**COVID-19 vaccine third doses for immunocompromised people**

The Australia’s immunisation experts, the [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation](https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-technical-advisory-group-on-immunisation-atagi) (ATAGI) recommends a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine for people over 12 years of age who are [severely immunocompromised](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). People who are severely immunocompromised have lower levels of immunity than the rest of the population. They need this third dose to get the same protection others will have from two.

Those who are eligible should get their third shot between two to six months after their second dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

People who are not severely immunocompromised do not need a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine at this stage, because they already have enough protection from the virus with two doses of vaccine.

**COVID-19 vaccine booster doses**

If you are 18 years and older and have had 2 doses of your COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months ago, you are eligible for an additional booster dose.

A booster dose increases your protection against:

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

**Vaccine safety**

The [Therapeutic Goods Administration](https://www.health.gov.au/contacts/therapeutic-goods-administration-tga)(TGA) are the scientists and medical experts who regulate and approve all vaccines, medicines and other medical products for use in Australia. The TGA has strict standards for allowing vaccines to be used in Australia. They only approve vaccines that are safe and effective. This includes the COVID-19 vaccines.

Once a vaccine is approved for use in Australia, the TGA checks every batch of the vaccines for quality. The TGA also closely monitors reports of suspected side effects.

The vaccines available in Australia are:

1. [Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines/about-the-pfizerbiontech-covid-19-vaccine)
2. [Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) vaccine](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines/about-the-oxfordastrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine)
3. [Spikevax (Moderna) vaccine](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-information-on-spikevax-moderna-covid-19-vaccine)

The vaccine you receive will depend on:

* when and where you will be vaccinated
* clinical guidelines that determine who each vaccine is recommended for.

Clinical trials for these vaccines show they are effective in preventing you from getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19. These trials involve tens of thousands of participants worldwide.

If you have any questions about vaccines, your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional can help. You can also call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on 1800 020 080 for more information. For interpreting services call 13 14 50.

**Side effects from COVID-19 vaccines**

All medicines, including vaccines, have risks and benefits. Usually side effects are mild and only last a few days.

As with any vaccine, you may have some temporary side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Common side effects include:

* a sore arm where the needle went in
* tiredness
* headache
* muscle pain, and
* fever and chills.

Some people will experience flu-like symptoms from the COVID-19 vaccine.

Most side effects are mild and go away within 1-2 days. As with any medicine or vaccine, there may be rare and/or unknown side effects.

See a doctor or nurse, or go directly to the hospital, if:

* you have a reaction that you consider severe or unexpected
* you are concerned about your condition after vaccination.

The TGA continues to monitor vaccines for safety while they are being used in Australia. More information about how Australia monitors the safety of vaccines, and how to report a suspected side effect, is available on the [TGA website](https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-vaccines).

**Rare side effects after the Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) vaccine**

The AstraZeneca vaccine appears to be associated with a rare side effect called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS). TTS is rare and occurs around 4-42 days after vaccination.

Symptoms can include abdominal pain and/or severe headache that does not go away after taking pain relief medication. You should seek medical attention immediately if you experience these symptoms.

More information about TTS symptoms is in the [Information on COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine factsheet](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/translated/covid-19-vaccination-information-on-covid-19-astrazeneca-vaccine-other-languages).

**Rare side effects after the Comirnaty (Pfizer) and Spikevax (Moderna) vaccines**

Myocarditis and pericarditis (heart inflammation) have been reported after the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. It is rare, and usually happens after the second dose. It is more likely to occur in men aged under 30 years old.

Most cases have been mild, and people have recovered quickly. Symptoms can include:

* chest pain
* pressure or discomfort in the chest
* Irregular, skipped heartbeats or ‘fluttering’
* fainting
* shortness of breath or
* pain when breathing.

You should seek medical attention if you experience these symptoms.

**Can I choose to get vaccinated?**

The Australian Government has not made vaccination mandatory.

However, state and territory public health orders can mandate vaccination in certain circumstances. For example, for some types of employment and for some community activities.

Please see your state and territory public health orders for information to find out if mandatory vaccination applies in your circumstances.

Choosing not to have a COVID-19 vaccine will not affect your family’s eligibility for Family Tax Benefit Part A, or child care fee assistance.

**International and domestic travel**

Passengers travelling to Australia must:

* get tested for COVID-19 72 hours or less before the scheduled flight departure
* show evidence of their negative test result when checking in to their flight.

People arriving in Australia may be [quarantined for 14 days](https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-international-travellers#quarantine-for-incoming-travellers) and might have to follow other travel restrictions by [state and territories](https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions/coronavirus-covid-19-domestic-travel-restrictions-and-remote-area-access#state-and-territory-travel-restrictions).

Before you travel interstate, check your local state and territory website for information about travel restrictions:

* [Australian Capital Territory COVID-19](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/)
* [New South Wales COVID-19](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19)
* [Northern Territory COVID-19](https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/)
* [Queensland COVID-19](https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/)
* [South Australia COVID-19](https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/)
* [Tasmania COVID-19](https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/)
* [Victoria COVID-19](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)
* [Western Australia COVID-19](https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus)

**Where to go for trusted information**

It’s important to stay informed about the COVID-19 vaccination program through reliable and official sources.

For accurate, evidence-based information about COVID-19 vaccines visit the [Home Affairs misinformation page](https://covid19inlanguage.homeaffairs.gov.au/misinformation-and-truths-about-coronavirus). Answers to common questions on COVID-19 vaccines is available [in 63 languages](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publication/covid-19-vaccines-common-questions-other-languages) on the Department of Health’s website.

You can also call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on 1800 020 080. For interpreting services call 131 450.

**Resources**