

What you need to know about Australia's COVID-19 vaccine

Let's all do our part to keep ourselves, our families and the Australian community safe from COVID-19.

The COVID-19 vaccine is free, safe and effective. Help stop the spread of COVID-19 within our community by getting vaccinated. The more people we have vaccinated, the more protected we and our communities will be against the virus.

Got questions about the COVID-19 vaccine? We are here to support you.

Contact us:

COVID-19 Response Team

Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5pm

📞 03 8850 4111 ✉ HRAR@accesshc.org.au



Carrington Health has changed its name to healthAbility.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected many lives around the world and within our community. We know this virus spreads from one person to another person through:

- droplets from sneezing, coughing and talking
- breathing in small particles in the air after sneezing and coughing
- touching infected surfaces and objects.

Together with healthy COVID-safe behaviours (such as physical distancing, using face masks when required, regular handwashing and getting COVID-19 tested when unwell), the COVID-19 vaccine is the next added layer of protection in helping us stop the COVID-19 spread.

Commonly Asked Questions

Who can get vaccinated?

The vaccine is free and voluntary for anyone living in Australia. This includes international students, refugees and asylum seekers, those on temporary visas and people whose visa has been cancelled.

We are committed to providing access to vaccinations to everyone in our community. The more people who are vaccinated, the more protected you and our community will be.

For more information about your eligibility, call the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 or visit covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au

What is the COVID-19 vaccine and how does it work?

The COVID-19 vaccine is a medicine that will help protect our bodies from the COVID-19 virus and stop us from getting sick. The COVID-19 vaccines work to strengthen our immune system by teaching our bodies to recognise and fight off this harmful virus if we were to come into contact with it.

Getting your COVID-19 vaccination is just one part of the puzzle to keep us all safe. Do your part, check your eligibility and book your appointment today.

How are COVID-19 vaccines developed and approved so quickly?

Many people are curious to know how the COVID-19 vaccines have been developed so quickly.

With the global need and urgency for a COVID-19 vaccine, governments and companies across the world spent much more money and resources to have it developed quickly.

Throughout this process, all steps for research, thorough testing, safety and monitoring were undertaken with the highest level of safety and clinical standards maintained.

As a result, the research and science tells us that the vaccine is safe and effective.

Australia has one of the best approval processes in the world and will not approve of any vaccine that is not safe or causes severe negative side effects. The COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the same vigorous safety testing as all other vaccines we have in our country.

Are the vaccines safe?

Yes, the vaccines are safe and effective. In Australia, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is a government

group that ensures all medicines work well and are safe to use. The TGA approves all vaccines before they can be used.

Getting vaccinated is one of the powerful tools in our COVID-19 defense toolkit to help us control and beat COVID-19.

I want to get vaccinated and I'm eligible - which vaccine will I receive?

There are currently two approved vaccines in Australia - the AstraZeneca vaccine and the Pfizer vaccine.

If you are aged:

- 50 years or older, you will receive the AstraZeneca vaccine
- 49 years and under, you will receive the Pfizer vaccine.

For information about your eligibility, call the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 or visit covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility

To ensure the COVID-19 vaccine provides maximum protection, two doses are required to be fully vaccinated. The time in between doses are:

- between 3 and 6 weeks for the Pfizer vaccine
- 12 weeks for the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Once you have received your first dose, you can make an appointment for your second dose with your health care professional or vaccination provider.

Where to get vaccinated and how to book your appointment

Vaccination clinics can vaccinate those who are physically able to attend the vaccination site. These sites will include hospitals, community health centers and at GP clinics.

For those who are not able to physically visit a vaccination site, we are setting up processes for you to get vaccination where you live - or to help you get to a vaccination centre.

Call your GP clinic or the **Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 to book your appointment today.**

Why should I get vaccinated?

The COVID-19 vaccines are free, safe and voluntary and will be made available to everyone in Australia.

Vaccinations have been the most effective way in preventing and protecting against many serious illnesses and diseases such as polio, smallpox and the flu. Vaccines help build your immune system by training it to recognise and fight against specific diseases.

When you get the COVID-19 vaccine, you are protecting yourself, your family and the community. It will protect you from getting really sick with COVID-19 symptoms and being hospitalised. It will also reduce the spread of COVID-19 to others.

The more people we have vaccinated, the more protected our communities will be from COVID-19.

What are the side effects?

You might experience some mild side effects, such as a sore arm where the needle was injected into your arm. This is a *very normal response* and occurs with a lot of other vaccines too.

Side effects sometimes experienced after getting vaccinated show that our body is "gearing up" and building our body's response to fight off this virus.

Some other mild symptoms will include a fever, headache, aches and feeling tired. This is also another normal reaction that your body will have to a vaccination. It's a sign that your body is working hard to build up its immunity.

Before you have your vaccine, we recommend that you speak to your doctor or health care worker if you have:

- had any allergic reactions particularly to vaccinations in the past
- existing health conditions and/or issues with your immune system
- taking any medication that thins your blood.

What do I need to bring with me when I get vaccinated?

You need to bring:

- your Medicare card and
- a proof of photo ID (such as a drivers license or passport).

If you do not have a standard photo ID, you can bring along other documentation such as a bank statement, utility bill, refugee or visa documents or a letter issued by the government (eg. Centrelink, Australian Tax Office).

If you do not have or you are not eligible for a Medicare Card, you will have to apply for an Individual Health Identifier (IHI) by visiting this website: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/forms/ms003

We can help you to organise and apply for an Individual Health Identifier if needed.

By having your proof of ID, this will help the government know which vaccine you were given and when you had your vaccination

Can the vaccine cause blood clots?

In Australia, the Therapeutic Goods Administration closely monitors research data and testing from overseas and locally for all medicines to ensure they are safe and effective. Our country has one of the best approval processes in the world and will not approve of any vaccine that is not safe and causes severe negative side effects.

Although there have been reports about blood clots, this has happened to a small number of people (with varying ages and pre-existing health conditions) out of the millions of people who have been vaccinated. The vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19 death, transmission and hospitalisation.

All vaccines carry a very small risk of side effects however, catching and spreading COVID-19 is a greater risk and harm to the community.

I have just had my flu vaccine; how long should I wait before getting my COVID-19 vaccine?

It is recommended that you wait 14 days between your flu vaccine and your COVID-19 vaccine. If you have any questions about this, please speak to your doctor or healthcare provider.

Can I still get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am vegetarian or have an allergy?

Each COVID-19 vaccine can be slightly different. It is important to talk to your doctor or healthcare provider about any existing medical conditions or allergies to find out if vaccination is suitable for you.

The Pfizer or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines do not contain the following ingredients: milk, eggs, latex, pork or pork products (such as pork gelatin).

Does the vaccine contain animal products or cells from an aborted foetus?

No

Are the vaccines Halal?

Yes



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SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

We are here to support you

If you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, need support with booking your appointment or require additional information, contact:

- us (the COVID-19 Response team) on (03) 8850 4111 or email HRAR@accesshc.org.au
- your doctor or healthcare provider if you have any concerns about the vaccine and your health
- the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 for further information about COVID-19 and booking your vaccine appointment.

**Let's all do our part to stay COVID-safe.
Let's stay safe and stay open.**

Please note: the information provided is current as of 27 May 2021 and is changing on a daily basis. For the most recent information, visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine or call the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398