

COVID-19 vaccination program

Information about getting vaccinated

OFFICIAL

A vaccine can stop you getting sick from COVID-19

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and for everyone. You can choose if you want to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The more people who are vaccinated, the more protected our community will be.

About the COVID-19 vaccines

There are two COVID-19 vaccines available for people in Victoria. Both the AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines have been tested many times by experts internationally to make sure they are safe and effective.

The Pfizer vaccine is given to people under 60 years of age. The AstraZeneca vaccine is given to people 60 years and over.

The vaccine is given as an injection, using a needle.

You will need two doses of vaccine for the best protection against COVID-19. You need to have the same vaccine both times. For example, if you have a Pfizer vaccine, you must receive a second dose of Pfizer.

The recommended time between your first and second doses are different depending on which vaccine you receive:

- for AstraZeneca it is 4 - 12 weeks
- for Pfizer it is 3 - 6 weeks.

You might feel some side effects after getting vaccinated. This is your body's natural reaction to medicine and is a sign the vaccine is working. Side effects don't happen to everyone and usually go away after a couple of days. You will be monitored by a health professional after your vaccine to make sure you are okay.

Getting vaccinated

On the day of your appointment a health professional will ask you if you want to be vaccinated and ask some questions to make sure it is safe for you to receive a vaccine. You should not attend your vaccination appointment if you have COVID-19 symptoms.

You will be able to talk with the health professional giving you the vaccine and ask any questions you have. An immuniser will give you your COVID-19 vaccine as an injection in your upper arm.

After your vaccination, you will need to stay in the centre for at least 15 minutes to make sure you are feeling okay. Some people might need to stay for longer, depending on their medical history.

You need two separate doses of the same vaccine to give you the best protection against COVID-19.

Frequently asked questions

What does the COVID-19 vaccine do?

The vaccine trains your body to find and fight against the COVID-19 virus. This stops you from getting very sick or dying from COVID-19.

Who should get a COVID-19 vaccine?

A large number of people are eligible to get their COVID-19 vaccines now. This includes:

- People who are 40 years of age and over
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders 16 years of age and over
- People who qualify because of their work or volunteering
- People with medical conditions or disability and their carers

For more information about who is eligible visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/who-can-get-vaccinated.

The vaccine you receive depends on your age. People who are 60 years of age and older are given AstraZeneca vaccine. People under 60 years of age receive the Pfizer vaccine.

Will the vaccines give me COVID-19?

COVID-19 vaccines do not give you COVID-19.

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?

The COVID-19 vaccines have been tested many times by experts worldwide to ensure they are safe and effective. In Australia, only vaccines that are safe and work well are approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

Getting vaccinated

Why should I get vaccinated?

Getting vaccinated will stop you getting very sick from COVID-19. It will protect you, your loved ones and the community.

Do I have to get vaccinated?

No. You can choose to get vaccinated. It is strongly recommended that you get vaccinated because it protects you, your loved ones and the community.

Why do I need two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Getting two doses of the same COVID-19 vaccine gives you the best protection against COVID-19. Having only one dose does not give you full protection. You must get two doses of the same vaccine. If you have had your first vaccine dose without serious adverse effects, you should receive your second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine as planned. This is safe, and recommended by ATAGI.

How can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

If you are 60 years of age or over you can get your COVID-19 vaccine at a doctor, GP respiratory clinic, community health service or vaccination centre.

If you are under 60 years of age and currently eligible you can get your COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination centre.

- Find a participating doctor, GP respiratory clinic or community health service through the [Australian Government Eligibility Checker](#).
- Book at a vaccination centre using the [online booking system](#) or by calling the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398. Some vaccination centres are accepting walk ins. For opening hours and locations visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccination-centres.

Who will give me my COVID-19 vaccine injections?

You will be given your COVID-19 vaccine by a healthcare professional such as nurse or doctor. Health professionals giving vaccines have done special training in how to give COVID-19 vaccines.

Can I choose which COVID-19 vaccine I get?

No. You don't get to choose which vaccine you receive. People who are 60 years of age and older are given AstraZeneca vaccine. People under 60 years of age receive the Pfizer vaccine.

All COVID-19 vaccines used in Australia are safe and very effective.

What are the side effects?

As with many medicines, people can feel some side effects after vaccination. These are expected and it is your body reacting to the medicine. Most side effects are mild, and you will recover without any problems. Not everyone experiences side effects.

Normal and very common reactions to vaccination include:

- pain, redness and/or swelling at site of injection
- fatigue
- headache
- mild fever
- muscle aches.

How do I get my second dose?

You should book your second dose appointment after you have your first dose. You don't need to get your second dose at the same location as you had your first dose. The recommended time between your first and second doses are different depending on which vaccine you receive:

- for AstraZeneca it is 4 -12 weeks
- for Pfizer it is 3 – 6 weeks.

How will I remember which vaccine I had and when my second dose is due?

At your first dose, the health professional will give you information about your vaccination and when your second dose is due.

Keep your vaccination information to share with the health professional providing your second dose.

Can I get a different brand of COVID-19 vaccine for my first and second dose?

No. You will need to have the same vaccine both times.

What happens if I miss my second dose or have it later than 12 weeks?

If your second dose has been delayed, you should get your second dose as soon as possible. If you have any questions about the timing of your second dose, talk with your doctor or healthcare professional.

To receive this document in another format, phone 1300 651 160, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email COVIDvaccination@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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