

# LET'S DO THIS

## COVID-19 vaccination for children (5-11 years)

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### Why should children aged 5 – 11 years be vaccinated against COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus that can cause serious illness and death, as well as long term health issues. It can spread very easily between people and sometimes has few or no symptoms, making it difficult to know you are infected before you pass it to others.

Even though COVID-19 infection in children is often milder than in adults, there are strong reasons to support vaccinating children:

- Vaccines give the immune system a helping hand. By vaccinating your child, you're helping to protect them from serious illness from COVID-19 and possible long-term effects.
- Vaccination also helps to protect friends, family and the community, including vulnerable people of all ages, by helping to reduce transmission.
- Vaccination helps to keep children in school and participating in social activities that are important for their learning and development.

Millions of children around the world have been safely vaccinated against COVID-19 already. Evidence shows vaccination offers excellent protection against serious illness from COVID-19 in children and helps keep your family safe and well.

### Do children get the same vaccines and doses as adults?

**No.** The approved vaccine for children aged 5 – 11 years is a special Pfizer (Comirnaty) paediatric vaccine, with two doses given 8 weeks apart.

The Pfizer vaccine dose in children aged 5-11 years is around one third of the dose given to people aged 12 years and older. A smaller dose is used in this age group as it can achieve the same high level of protection in children as the dose given to people aged 12 years and older.

### Are the side effects for children the same as those for adults?

**Yes.** Children can experience the same common side effects as adults after getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

These side effects are generally mild and go away after a day or two and may include:

- Headache
- Fever and chills
- Fatigue / tiredness
- Muscle pain and a sore arm at the injection site

Minor side effects are normal and show that the immune system is responding to the vaccine. More serious side effects from the vaccines are very rare, with the risk of those same side effects much higher from catching COVID-19 itself. If side effects persist or you are concerned, speak to your GP.

### **Does the risk of a serious side effect mean I shouldn't get my child vaccinated?**

**No.** All the COVID-19 vaccines used in Australia have good safety profiles and have been rigorously tested and assessed by Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) before being approved and recommended for use.

More than 5 million children in the USA and millions more across the world aged 5 – 11 years have safely received a COVID-19 vaccine to date.

### **Will COVID-19 vaccination affect my child's growth, development, or future fertility?**

**No.** There is no evidence that a COVID-19 vaccine can affect a child's growth and development.

Long-term effects from COVID-19 can have lasting impacts on health and wellbeing. The risk of complications from catching the virus are higher than the usually mild side-effects of vaccination.

### **Should my child be vaccinated if they have already had COVID-19?**

**Yes.** Children who have had COVID-19 should receive a vaccination once they have recovered from their illness to help protect against another infection.

### **Can my child be vaccinated without my consent?**

**No.** Children aged 5 – 11 years require a parent or legal guardian to give consent to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Consent is required when booking, and again at the appointment. If the parent or guardian cannot attend the appointment with the child, they can nominate another adult to attend the appointment in their place when completing the online consent during the booking process.

Details of the nominated accompanying adult must be provided during booking so that their identity and permission to give consent by proxy can be verified on the day of the appointment.

For more information on consent, visit: [Vaccination consent FAQs for parents and guardians](#).

### **Is COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for children (including for school and sports etc)?**

**No.** Vaccination against COVID-19 is not mandatory, but it is highly encouraged.

There is no requirement for children to have a COVID-19 vaccine to participate in school or community sports activities.

### **Can my child have a booster vaccination?**

**No.** The primary vaccination course generates a strong immune response in younger people.

ATAGI will consider if a booster dose is needed for this age group in the future.

### **Will children be vaccinated against COVID-19 at school?**

**No.** Make a booking for your child's COVID-19 vaccine through your GP, local pharmacy, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service or a NSW Health vaccination clinic.

### **How do I book?**

Parents are encouraged to book a vaccination appointment for their child as soon as possible.

**Book now online** - [www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/vaccination/get-vaccinated](http://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/vaccination/get-vaccinated)

**Call to book:** Booking helpline: 1800 57 11 55 / Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS): 131 450