



COVID-19 vaccine phased roll out Community Frequently Asked Questions

Updated April 2021

COVID-19 Vaccine roll out

- These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are based on current information and will be updated as further information is available.
- For general COVID-19 enquiries call the Victorian Coronavirus hotline on **1800 675 398** 24 hours, open seven days a week.
- Or the Australian Government National coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine helpline on **1800 020 080**
- The Australian Government dictates which vaccine is available and is leading the roll out across Australia, with assistance from States and Territories to administer the vaccine.
- The Australian Government is responsible for purchasing the vaccines, ensuring their safety, distribution and deciding on the priority groups.

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Key points

- People in the Albury Wodonga region and surrounds are being urged to remain patient as the COVID-19 vaccination program continues to roll out.
- With currently no community spread of COVID-19, health care providers in the region have time to plan and coordinate vaccination in local communities.
- When people become eligible, vaccine screening and administration is free for everyone (including non-Medicare) who wants to be vaccinated.
- As more vaccine becomes available and supplies increase there will be more opportunity for the community to receive the vaccine if they want it.
- The wellbeing of the community is the priority of Albury Wodonga Health, our partners, GP networks and health centres.
- We are ready to support the community as the vaccine is released in accordance with the Australian Government's phased roll out.

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About the Vaccine

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Question

Answer

When can I get the vaccine?

The vaccine is being rolled out in phases with priority groups receiving the vaccine first. For more information please check the [Australian Government website on who gets the vaccine](#). We cannot choose when the vaccine is available locally, this decision is made by both the Victorian Department of Health and the Australian Government.

AWH is currently only vaccinating phase 1a recipients.

Some GP clinics are now starting to vaccinate phase 1b recipients. If you are eligible in the phase 1b stage and want to get vaccinated now, please check to see which GPs are offering the vaccination on the [Australian Government health website](#)

Refer to the [Australian Government COVID-19 vaccine eligibility checker](#) for more information.

What COVID-19 vaccines are currently available in Australia?

Currently two vaccines, the Pfizer vaccine and the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine have been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for use in the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccination program. Detailed information about the vaccines is available [here](#).

Is there a choice of vaccine type?

No, under the Australian Government's roll out program those eligible will receive the approved and available vaccine at that time. More information is available on the Australian Government's COVID-19 website [here](#)

How many vaccinations are needed?

Two doses of the same vaccine are required for optimal protection. For more information please refer to the [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\)](#).

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

Learn how vaccines train a person's immune system and how the different types of COVID-19 vaccines work. For more information please see [the Australian Government site on how COVID-19 vaccines work](#).

Will the vaccine be effective against the new variant COVID-19 strains?

It is currently unknown how effective these vaccines will be against emerging variants. It is likely that they will still have some efficacy, and work is ongoing to determine this. Check the [Australian Government site for the latest news on COVID-19 Vaccines in Australia](#).

How long will it take for everyone to be vaccinated?

The vaccine is currently not yet available to the general public; it is expected to be more widely available mid 2021. Please refer to [Australian Government COVID-19 vaccine eligibility checker](#) for more information.

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Vaccine Safety

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Question

Answer

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe and effective

Before a vaccine is approved for use in Australia, it must meet the [Therapeutic Goods Administration's \(TGA\) rigorous assessment and approval processes](#). This includes assessment of the vaccine's safety, quality and effectiveness. For more information go [here](#).

You can email the Australian Government's covidvaccineenquiries@health.gov.au if you have questions on safety of the vaccine.

Where can I find information on the AstraZeneca vaccine?

Information on the AstraZeneca vaccine can be found at the [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\)](#) website.

What monitoring is in place once I have received the vaccine?

Everyone who receives a COVID-19 vaccine will be monitored in an observation areas for at least 15 minutes after receiving their dose. If you have, or previously have had, a mild to moderate reaction you will be asked to remain on-site and under supervision at the vaccine site for 30 minutes after your dose.

I am taking prescribed medications, is it safe to take this vaccine?

It is recommended you seek advice from your prescribing GP prior to having the vaccine.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for people with immunodeficiencies?

We are advised that both the Pfizer and Oxford AstraZeneca vaccines are safe for people with immunodeficiency and autoimmune conditions. However, the COVID-19 vaccines may be less effective for people with immune deficiencies, or people who are on medicines that affect the immune system.

If you have an immunodeficiency or are on medicines that affect your immune system talk to your medical specialist or GP prior to booking an appointment when eligible

Can the influenza (flu) vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine be taken together? If not, how far apart?

No, they should be administered separately and the COVID-19 vaccine will not protect you against seasonal flu. The ATAGI recommends a minimum 14 days between administration of a COVID-19 vaccine and the seasonal influenza vaccine.

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Preparing for the vaccine

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How can I prepare for my COVID-19 vaccine?

Once eligible you can prepare by making sure your Medicare details are correct, while continuing to practise good hygiene and physical distancing. If you feel unwell, do not go to work or participate in other activities, get tested and stay home until you get a negative COVID-19 test result

Where can I find more information?

We encourage you to read trusted evidence-based information i.e. official government sources and medical experts, for example <https://www.health.gov.au/> and the Victorian Department of Health on <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

There are links to additional information within this pack.

I have an appointment scheduled, what should I take with me?

To each appointment you need to bring

- QR Code provided via your vaccination booking confirmation email
- Photo ID (eg. drivers licence)
- Mobile device or pen and paper
- Medicare Card (if available)

What if I am unwell on the day of my appointment?

YOU SHOULD NOT ATTEND IF YOU ARE UNWELL with a fever, cough, runny nose or other symptoms that could be from COVID-19. Or if you are awaiting COVID-19 test results, or have tested positive with COVID-19 and are in isolation.

When can I expect the next phase of the roll out?

The vaccine is being rolled out in phases with priority groups receiving the vaccine first. For more information please check the [Australian Government website on who gets the vaccine](#). While we work collaboratively on this process we cannot chose when the vaccine is available locally, this decision is made by both the Victorian Department of Health and the Australian Government.

Refer to the [Australian Government COVID-19 vaccine eligibility checker](#) for more information.

Some GP clinics are now starting to vaccinate phase 1b recipients. If you are eligible in the phase 1b stage and want to get vaccinated now, please check to see which GPs are offering the vaccination on the [Australian Government Health website](#)

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Vaccine side effects

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Question

Answer

What are the vaccine side effects?

Like many other vaccinations, COVID-19 vaccines can have side effects. These include pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills or fever. These symptoms are generally mild and on average resolve within a day or two.

More information go to the [Australian Government site - what happens after your vaccine.](#)

Similar to the side effects, symptoms of COVID-19 infection can include coughing, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose and loss of or change in sense of smell or taste. If you have these symptoms, before or after receiving the vaccine, get tested and isolate until you get a negative result.

How will COVID-19 vaccines be recorded?

The COVID-19 vaccine will be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Record (AIR). This is a national register that records vaccines given to all people in Australia.

What if I have a history of allergic reactions, adverse side effects or anaphylaxis to vaccines

When booking and attending each of your vaccination appointments you must provide your allergy history.

Anyone who has previously experienced an allergic reaction or an anaphylaxis response following a vaccination, must consult their GP before booking and attending the vaccination appointment. Everyone who receives a COVID-19 vaccine will be monitored in an observation area for at least 15 minutes after receiving a dose. If anyone has previously experienced a mild to moderate reaction they can still receive the vaccine, but must remain on-site and under supervision at the vaccine site for 30 minutes after your second dose.

If you experience a severe adverse reaction following a vaccination, please call an ambulance on 000.

Timing of doses

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Question	Answer
How many doses of the COVID-19 vaccine does everyone need?	The ATAGI has advised that two doses of the vaccine are required to provide optimal protection. Once you are eligible, remember to book and attend both appointments.
Will I need a COVID-19 vaccination booster in 12 months' time?	It is yet to be determined if boosters will be needed, however you must attend both vaccination sessions (dose one and dose two) for optimum protection
Can the influenza (flu) vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine be taken together? If not, how far apart?	No, they should be administered separately and the COVID-19 vaccine will not protect you against seasonal flu. The ATAGI recommends a minimum 14 days between administration of a COVID-19 vaccine and the seasonal influenza vaccine.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine compulsory?

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Is the vaccine compulsory?

Answer

The vaccination is not mandatory and your choice to decline the vaccine is respected, for more information please go to the [Australian Government site - Vaccination for COVID-19 is voluntary](#).

To protect yourself and your family, the community and health care staff, it is strongly encouraged you have the COVID-19 vaccination.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

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Is there information for women breastfeeding, pregnant or planning a pregnancy?

Answer

The Australian Government has released guidance on the use of the vaccine for pregnant and breastfeeding women, and women who are planning to become pregnant.

You can access [COVID-19 vaccination – decision guide for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy](#).

As with any health concerns during pregnancy, women with queries about vaccination while pregnant should talk to their GP or midwife.

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Question

Where can I get the vaccine?

Answer

Some GP clinics are now starting to vaccinate phase 1b recipients. If you are eligible in the phase 1b stage and want to get vaccinated now, please check to see which GPs are offering the vaccination on the Australian Government health website

We are asking everyone in our community to be patient. More people will be able to be vaccinated when the supply of vaccines increases. The Australian Government has said that most Australians who are not frontline workers will become eligible for vaccination from the middle of this year.

Victorian hospitals have enough vaccine for frontline, at-risk workers only. We cannot take bookings from anyone else, including members of the public.

Some older people and people with medical conditions are eligible now. To check your eligibility, and find which GP clinics near you are providing vaccinations, please refer to the [Australian Government COVID-19 vaccine eligibility checker](#) for more information.

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Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

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Question	Answer
Where is more information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?	COVID-19 advice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and remote communities can be found on the Australian Government website .

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Information in other languages?

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Is there information for non-English speaking people?	Information about COVID-19 vaccines has been translated into multiple languages, you can find more on the Australian Government website

Where can I find information for people with a disability?

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Question	Answer
Where can I find information for people with a disability?	COVID-19 advice for people with disability can be found on the Australian Government site

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Thank you.
**By working together we can keep ourselves, our
family and the community safe and protected.**