



# COVID-19 vaccines: Moderna vaccine – 6-11 year-olds FAQs

23 February 2022

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends that Moderna COVID-19 vaccine can be used for the primary course of COVID-19 vaccination in 6-11 year-olds.

This follows the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) provisional approval in February 2022 of Moderna for use in Australia for this age group.

## How is Moderna different from other COVID-19 vaccines?

Messenger RNA, or mRNA, is the key ingredient in the Moderna vaccine.

mRNA are genetic instructions to train the body to fight against COVID-19. After getting the vaccine, your body makes copies of the spike protein. Your immune system will then learn to recognise and fight against the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19.

Like all other approved COVID-19 vaccines in Australia, the Moderna vaccine does not contain any live virus and cannot give you COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines in Australia must pass lots of safety tests before they can be given to people. TGA is responsible for checking vaccine safety and approving vaccines for use in Australia.

## Who is eligible for the Moderna vaccine?

ATAGI approved the use of the Moderna vaccine in August 2021 for individuals aged 18 and over after the TGA approved its use in Australia. In September 2021, Moderna was approved for individuals aged 12 and older. Now, as of 23 February 2022, ATAGI has approved the Moderna vaccine for individuals aged 6 years and older.

## When and where will the Moderna vaccine be available?

Depending on stock supplies, Moderna will be available to Victorians of this age group from 24 February 2022 through:

- some state-run vaccination centres
- doctor's clinics
- pharmacies
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

Contact your provider prior to booking to check if the Moderna vaccine is available.

## Is the Moderna vaccine approved for vaccinating children?

Yes. As per the [ATAGI](#) announcement, the vaccine is now available for individuals aged 6 years and older. However, different dosages apply depending on age.

## Is Moderna available for children aged 5?

No. Pfizer remains the only vaccination available for children who are 5 years old. There are currently no vaccines licensed for children aged 4 years and under.

## If my child receives Pfizer for their first dose and then turns 6 before their second dose, can they receive the Moderna vaccine for their second dose?

There are currently no published data regarding the use of mixed vaccination schedules for children under 12 years. ATAGI do not recommend the use of mixed primary schedules in this age group.

## How many injections will my child need?

The recommended schedule for Moderna vaccination in children aged 6-11 years is 2 doses, 8 weeks apart.

The Moderna vaccine is currently only available as a third dose for individuals who are 18 and over, and for those aged 6 and over who are severely immunocompromised.

## Is the vaccine safe for people who are severely immunocompromised?

It is recommended that individuals who are severely immunocompromised receive three doses to be completely protected against COVID-19 variants. Speak with your health professional about third doses.

## Is the vaccine safe for people who have had COVID-19?

Yes. Moderna can be administered to people who have previously been infected with COVID-19, in line with recommendations for other COVID-19 vaccines.

If you have had COVID-19, tell your immunisation provider. You can have Moderna after you recover from COVID-19, or may defer for up to 4 months after recovery. Consult your GP if you have ongoing illness associated with the virus.

## Are there any side effects associated with Moderna?

Just like other vaccines, it is normal to feel some side effects after receiving the Moderna vaccine. Common side effects include:

- pain, redness or swelling at the injection site
- swollen or tender lymph nodes, particularly in the armpit
- fever or chills
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- nausea or vomiting
- joint pain.

These side effects are usually mild and usually go away within one or two days.

## When should I seek medical attention after vaccination with Moderna?

Serious side effects are very rare.

You may experience the following uncommon side effects after you receive your vaccine:

- severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)
- myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle)
- pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart)
- You should see your doctor if you are worried about any of these side effects.

You should seek medical attention after vaccination if your child has:

- symptoms of a severe allergic reaction, such as difficulty breathing, wheezing, a fast heartbeat, or if your child collapses
- chest pain, pressure or discomfort
- irregular heartbeat, skipped beats or 'fluttering'
- fainting
- shortness of breath or pain with breathing
- new or unexpected symptoms, or if you are worried about a potential side effect
- an expected side effect of the vaccine that has not gone away after a few days, like headache, fever or chills.

## Why should we look for these symptoms?

While rare, some people may have an allergic reaction to the vaccine, or an ingredient in the vaccine. If you have any of these symptoms, it is important you see your doctor. And if you think you are having a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis), call 000 straight away.

Safety data from clinical trials performed on more than 4700 participants showed that the vaccine is safe in children and most side effects were mild to moderate.

The most frequent adverse reactions in children aged 6-11 years old were short-term and included injection site pain, headache, muscle pain, fever and nausea and vomiting.

## Will immunisers require further training to administer the vaccine?

Yes. Immunisers must complete compulsory Moderna training provided by the Australian government before they are allowed to administer any COVID-19 vaccine in Australia. Each brand of COVID-19 vaccine has a separate training package.

## Where can I find more information?

- ATAGI [statement on the use of Moderna in 6-11 year-olds](#)
- Australian Government resource: [About Moderna](#)
- Read more about [COVID-19 vaccines](#)
- Find out more about how to [get your COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- View the [Product Information of the Moderna vaccine](#)

## General COVID-19 vaccination FAQs

## Where can I get vaccinated?

The Victorian Government will provide more information on the Moderna for 6-11 year-olds over the coming weeks. For up-to-date information on [how to book your vaccination appointment](#) and a list of state-run vaccination centres, visit the Victorian Government's [Coronavirus website](#).

## Can I still get a COVID-19 vaccine if I am not an Australian citizen?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines are free for everyone living in Australia.

You do not need an [Individual Healthcare Identifier](#) or a Medicare card to get a COVID-19 vaccine at a [vaccination centre](#).

- If you do not have a Medicare card, you can apply for an Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI).
- [Individual Healthcare Identifiers](#) are used to match the correct record to the person being treated – no clinical information is linked to the identifier.

Applying for an [Individual Healthcare Identifier](#) and being vaccinated for COVID-19 will not impact your visa status or your eligibility for government payments.

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

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