

COVID-19 Vaccines for Primary School Kids

How does COVID-19 affect kids in primary school?

All children are at risk of getting COVID-19, but the good news is their symptoms are generally mild.



Many children experience a cough, fever, and a runny nose, and only require rest at home, recovering quickly.¹ A very small percentage of children experience a barking cough, prolonged fever, breathing difficulties and abdominal pain, and these children are advised to see their doctor.

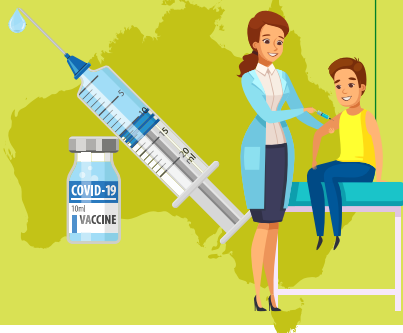


Children with underlying health conditions are at higher risk of experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms. Conditions include asthma, obesity, prematurity, and compromised immune systems.²⁻⁵

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

In Australia, children receive mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.

An mRNA vaccine is a way to deliver a message to cells in the body.



➤ For mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, the message delivered to cells is the instructions on how to make just one part of the COVID-19 virus – the “spike protein”.

➤ Cells then start making this spike protein. Because the message in the mRNA vaccine tells the body to make only the spike protein, and not the entire COVID-19 virus, it can't make a person sick from COVID-19.

➤ The immune system recognises the generated spike proteins on the cells as being foreign to the body and starts training itself to fight off the virus. **If a vaccinated person is exposed to COVID-19, the immune system immediately recognises the COVID-19 spike protein and generates a strong and rapid immune response to try and limit the infection.**

Why do children need a COVID-19 vaccine if they're not getting very sick?

While severe disease and hospitalisation is uncommon in children, it can occur in some cases and vaccinating children helps to protect against this.⁶ Vaccination also benefits the entire family, as well as the community around your child, as it may help to slow the virus spreading to vulnerable people such as elderly grandparents and younger kids who aren't yet able to be vaccinated. It is important that we let children keep on doing what children do. We have seen the disruption that COVID-19 can have on young lives from a schooling perspective and also on the social and emotional aspects of their lives.^{7,8}



Is vaccinating children safe?



The COVID-19 vaccine has undergone rigorous testing and monitoring and has been shown to be **safe and effective** for primary school children.⁹

More primary-school aged children in America have now received a COVID-19 vaccine than the entire population of children this age in Australia, and this has shown us that it is **safe for children**.¹⁰

Research demonstrates that the **benefit of having the vaccine far outweighs the risks**. It provides vital protection against severe complications and hospitalisation from the virus and significant vaccine-associated side effects are very rare.¹¹

Some parents have raised concerns about COVID-19 vaccines and fertility. Studies show that there's **no difference in fertility levels** in women or men before and after COVID-19 vaccination.¹²⁻¹⁵

How many doses do kids need? Will they be required to have booster shots?



Kids receive two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, given eight weeks apart. The interval can be shortened in special circumstances to a minimum of 3 weeks, for higher risk groups (such as those with medical risk factors for severe illness) in the context of ongoing community transmission.

For children aged five to 11 years, each dose is one third of an adult sized dose of the vaccine. This dosage is based on age, not weight.¹⁶



Children have incredibly robust immune systems that have a fantastic response to the vaccine and, at this stage, it is not recommended that children receive boosters. **However, it is now recommended that severely immunocompromised children aged five or older should receive three initial COVID-19 vaccines, with the third dose given two to four months after the second dose.**¹⁷

How effective is the COVID-19 vaccine in this age group?

Research has shown that the **Pfizer vaccine** given to this age group can prevent more than **90% of COVID-19 infections seven days after receiving the second dose**.¹¹



These vaccines are **highly effective against preventing infection and severe complications that require hospitalisation**.¹¹

What should I do if my child experiences any side effects from the vaccination?

Many children only experience mild side effects after receiving their COVID-19 vaccine such as pain and swelling in the arm, feeling tired, a mild fever, headache and sore muscles and joints.⁹



There have been rare reports of more serious side effects such as heart inflammation (myocarditis and pericarditis) in children and adults.^{18,19}

This condition is more likely to occur from a COVID-19 infection rather than from the vaccine.²⁰

However, if your child complains of a sore chest, shortness of breath or a fast heartbeat within 5 days of their vaccine, please seek medical care.

Where can my child get vaccinated?



In WA, children can be vaccinated at:

- GP clinics,
- state-run clinics,
- some pharmacies and
- Aboriginal Medical Services.

Visit **Roll Up WA** for more information and to make a booking.



For more information on
COVID-19 in kids visit
tacklingcovid19.org.au

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