

COVID-19 vaccination for children aged 5 to 11 years

Information for primary care providers

16th December 2021

OFFICIAL

On 9 December 2021, the Australian Technical Group on Immunisation [approved](#) the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children between 5 and 11 years of age.

COVID-19 vaccines for this age group are [planned](#) to be available through participating general practices, pharmacies, Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations and family-friendly vaccination centres in Victoria from 10 January 2022. There are approximately 578,000 5-11 year olds in Victoria.

Vaccination pathways for 5-11 year olds

- **State vaccination centres:** Some sites will be transformed into Australian bush-themed, child-friendly and welcoming environments informed by consultation with children and parents of children with disabilities and families from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Each centre will have supports available to minimise experiences of anxiety for children receiving a vaccine, including Buzzy Bees, Coolsense applicators and Viewfinders. In addition, virtual reality headsets will be available for children with severe anxiety or needle phobia.
- **Low sensory environments:** Frankston Community Vaccination Hub – Bayside Centre, Cranbourne Turf Club, Geelong – Former Ford Factory, Campbellfield Ford Complex Indoor Vaccination Site, Melton Vaccination Hub (Indoors) and Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital will have low sensory environments for children who have anxiety, physical and developmental disability and/or sensory sensitivities.
- **Drive through vaccination clinics:** will be available at [Melton and Campbellfield](#)
- **Pop-ups:** The Victorian Department of Health will be rolling out vaccination pop-ups in community settings and schools in the early stages of 2022. Please continue to monitor the Coronavirus website for further updates of locations, dates and times.
- **Severe needle phobia:** Hospital-based programs will be available to manage pain and anxiety associated with vaccine administration, which can be a source of distress for children and their families. These programs will utilise specialised techniques to reduce pain and anxiety experiences, such as effective preparation, distraction techniques, and pain management strategies.



- **Sedation services:** If severe needle phobia techniques are unsuccessful and immunisers are unable to vaccinate a child safely, it is recommended a referral to [Victorian Specialist Immunisation Services](#) is made to explore options, including immunisation under sedation.
- **Vaccination at home appointments:** Children aged 5-11 with a physical, psychological and/or developmental disability can access vaccination appointments in their homes. Families and Immunisers can book an at-home appointment by calling the coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline on 1800 675 398. People with special requirements or a disability (and their carer) are encouraged to contact a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) to help with their booking.

Vaccination support coordination

- **Vaccination support for children with disability or special needs:** [Disability Liaison Officers](#) will be available to assist parents of children in preparing for and booking an appropriate vaccination appointment. A Disability Liaison Officer may recommend an appointment at a low sensory clinic, in-home vaccination visit, via a family-friendly General Practice or a sedation service.
- **Information and vaccination support options:** COVID-19 health enquiries, including accessing Victorian State Government payments, can be accessed via the Coronavirus hotline on 1800 375 398, from early January.
- **Victorian Aboriginal COVID-19 Information line:** provides Aboriginal community members access to Aboriginal staff who can answer questions about COVID-19, getting vaccinated and directing callers to available support needed via 1800 312 911 (9 am-5 pm, 7 days a week)



Themed collateral ordering by primary care

State-operated vaccination sites are undertaking appropriate adjustments and implementing universal service design strategies to ensure all Victorian children and their families/carers can have positive experiences and outcomes when attending.

The Victorian Department of Health (DH) will have a range of items available to order at no cost for participating Victorian General Practices and Community Pharmacies. Items will include decals, posters and comforting toys for children and their families. DH will share more information about the range of items available and ordering processes in early January 2022.



Responding to vaccination anxiety within primary care

Participating general practices and pharmacies may wish to consider ordering items such as [Buzzy Bees](#), [Coolsense](#), [Virtual Reality headsets](#) and [Viewfinders](#) to deliver vaccination appointments to children and manage heightened anxiety or pain sensations experienced by children receiving a 1st or 2nd dose.

Immunisers within Primary Care should exercise their clinical judgement in aborting vaccination attempts and exploring other options, including possible referral to a DLO for support coordination. Outcomes from DLO support coordination may involve supported case management into alternate vaccination models or referral to the Victorian Specialist Immunisation Services (VicSIS)

Education and training

Commonwealth training

Mandatory [training](#) for anyone administering COVID-19 vaccines to children aged 5 to 11 years will be available from 20 December 2021.

Victorian training

Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre (MVEC) has been engaged to provide training, which is mandatory for staff working at state vaccination centres and optional for primary care staff.

In addition, participants can self-record their participation in the sessions for CPD hours with their relevant professional body.

A recording of the [MVEC immunising children and infants webinar](#) will be available online in the week commencing 20th December 2021.

Resources for patients

- <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/who-can-get-vaccinated>
- [Talking to your child about COVID-19](#)
- [Royal Children's Hospital podcast](#)
- [RCH Facebook Live: COVID-19 vaccinations for five to 11 year olds: Your questions answered 16 December, 11am](#)
- [Amaze social scripts COVID-19 vaccination](#)
- [VaxFacts COVID-19 questions asked and answered](#)

Resources for clinicians

- National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance - [COVID-19 vaccines: Frequently asked questions](#)
- Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) - [COVID-19 vaccine: Information for consumers and health professionals](#)
- [Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy](#)
- [Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre](#)
- Several [resources specific to COVID-19 vaccination for people with autism](#) are available through Amaze including training tools, checklists and social scripts that explain the COVID-19 vaccination process.