

COVID-19 VACCINATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (v.16)



- Access the information directly without scrolling by holding the “Ctrl” key and “clicking” on the section required on the “Contents Table”.
- Should a link not open correctly, please refer to the “[COVID-19 Work Health & Safety – FAQ’s / Fact Sheets / Resources](#)” intranet page for the latest document referenced.
- All superseded documents (FAQ, Factsheets, etc.) should be removed from circulation on the release of a new version.
- **Note:** these FAQs are accurate as at the date of publication. As COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation this information may outdated.

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VERSION UPDATES

The following sections have been updated within this version:

- (Updated) Do I still need to get a flu shot this year?

Previous version (15) update:

- (Updated) Which vaccine will I receive?
- (Updated) Can I get a booster vaccination?
- (Removed) How do I report a bad reaction after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?
- (Removed) Are there any health conditions that would preclude me getting the vaccine if we all get vaccinated?
- (Removed) Does this mean we no longer have to use PPE or maintain physical distancing?
- (Removed) If we are administering the vaccine in house, who is qualified to administer the vaccine?
- (Removed) If I have been vaccinated for COVID-19, will this make me test positive to COVID-19?

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1 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Why do we vaccinate?

COVID-19 vaccination reduces the risk of:

- severe COVID-19 related illness
- hospitalisation
- death

1.2 Is the vaccine mandatory?

Yes, as per directive from the Commissioner of Police dated 7th September 2021,

1. All applicable members of NSWPF (officers and administrative employees) cannot perform any duties unless:
 - a. if the duties are performed on or after 30 September 2021 the member has received at least 1 dose of a COVID-19 vaccine; and
 - b. if the duties are performed on or after 30 November 2021 the member has received at least 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.
2. If required by a member's manager, supervisor or Commander, a member must provide vaccination evidence.
3. The directions in 1 and 2 above do not apply to a member of NSWPF:
 - a. who is unable, due to a medical contraindication, to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and presents a medical contraindication certificate in the form approved by NSW Health (accessible via Service NSW) to their manager, supervisor or Commander; or
 - b. as the Commissioner determines appropriate in his absolute discretion, or the absolute discretion of a member of NSWPF the Commissioner delegates to make such a determination, subject to consideration of their specific circumstances at the time of determination.

For any further information, refer to:

- [COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate direction](#)
- [HR Vaccination Factsheet](#)
- [COVID-19 FAQs](#)

1.3 How many doses will I need to be vaccinated for my primary series?

The primary series of COVID-19 vaccines require two (2) doses.

- First dose helps the immune system create a response against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Second dose further boosts the immune response to ensure long-term protection.

It is recommended that the same vaccine type is administered and the scheduled two-doses (i.e., timeframes between vaccinations) is adhered to.

[ATAGI recommends a third dose](#) for people who are severely immunocompromised to reach full protection. Refer to [Section 2 Booster Vaccination](#) for more information.

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1.4 Which vaccines are available?

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will only be in a position to make a provisional registration decision for a vaccine once all required data relating to safety, quality and efficacy has been provided and assessed.

Current evidence has demonstrated that all vaccines are effective in reducing the incident and severity of COVID-19. The following table outlines the [vaccinations](#) that are available for use in Australia:

Sponsor	Name / other information	Type	Further information Regulatory status
Moderna Australia Pty Ltd	SPIKEVAX (elasomeran) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional Determination Notice Australian Public Assessment Report for Elasomeran Australian Product Information Consumer Medical Information 	mRNA	a. Provisionally approved on 9 August 2021 for adults aged 18 years and over. b. Provisionally approved on 3 September 2021 for individuals aged 12-17 years. c. Booster dose provisionally approved on 7 December 2021 for individuals aged 18 years and over. d. Application for use in individuals <12 years of age under evaluation.
Bioclect Pty Ltd Novavax	NUVAXOVID <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional Determination Notice 	Protein vaccine	Provisionally approved on 19 January 2022 for individuals aged 18 years and over
Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd	COMIRNATY – BNT162b2 [mRNA] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional determination notice Australian Public Assessment Report for BNT162b2 (mRNA) Australian Product Information Comirnaty Consumer Medical Information 	mRNA	a. Provisionally approved on 25 January 2021 for individuals aged 16 years and over. b. Provisionally approved on 22 July 2021 for individuals aged 12-15 years and over. c. Booster dose provisionally approved on 26 October 2021 for individuals aged 18 years and over. d. Provisionally approved on 3 December 2021 for individuals aged 5-11 years. e. Booster dose provisionally approved on 27 January 2022 for individuals aged 16-17 years old.
AstraZeneca Pty Ltd	VAXZEVRIA (previously COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional determination notice Australian Public Assessment Report for ChAdOx1-S Australian Product Information Consumer Medical Information 	Viral vector	a. Provisionally approved on 15 February 2021 for individuals aged 18 years and over. b. Booster dose under evaluation.

Seek medical advice from your treating practitioner more specific information on your individual health situation.

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1.5 Will I be immune after receiving my COVID-19 vaccination?

Trials have shown COVID-19 vaccines have high levels of efficacy, however like other vaccinations, COVID-19 vaccines may not provide 100% protection. It takes time for your body to build up an immune response after you get your vaccination. You must continue to comply with the existing safety protocols such as the use of PPE, physical distancing, and hand hygiene.

1.6 Has the vaccination been adequately tested?

All vaccines used in Australia are thoroughly tested for safety before they are approved. Every vaccine given to Australians must pass all three scientific testing phases before it is registered for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). Refer to [COVID-19 vaccine approval process](#) for more information.

Further information on vaccine safety can be found in the following resources:

- [Questions about vaccination](#)
- [The Science of Immunisation: Questions and Answers](#)
- [The Australian Immunisation Handbook 10th edition](#) (for health professionals)

While COVID-19 vaccines have been developed more quickly than usual, safety has not been compromised. In this case, the timeline was shortened without sacrificing quality by:

- Combining phase I with phase II trials — Since phase I studies include a small number of people and evaluate whether the candidate vaccine causes an immune response and is safe, scientists could look at data from a group of people as phase II was progressing to make these evaluations.
- Manufacturing “at risk” — While completing the large phase III clinical trials, manufacturers began producing the vaccine, so that if it was shown to be safe and effective, they would have large numbers of doses ready. The reason this is not typically the approach is because if the vaccine does not work, the manufacturer will have spent a significant amount of money to produce something that needs to be thrown away.

1.7 Are there any known side effects or long-term issues from the vaccine?

It is not uncommon to have certain reactions after vaccination. Like some other medicines, vaccines can cause side effects, such as a low-grade fever, or pain or redness at the injection site, muscle aches, fatigue and headaches. Mild reactions may be experienced but eventually will go away within a few days on their own and severe or long-lasting side effects are rare. Vaccines are continually monitored for safety to detect and record adverse events. Persons with existing or known medical conditions **must** disclose the information prior to receiving the vaccine.

1.8 What if I get sick after being vaccinated against COVID-19?

Officers can access normal sick leave provisions as required or submit a P902 form if considered work related. This will be assessed by our insurer on a case-by-case basis and will be dealt with accordingly.

1.9 How do I report a bad reaction after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

Adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) must be reported to the treating physicians.

If you are in the workplace, immediately notify your supervisor who will monitor and assess the situation. Where immediate medical treatment is required, an ambulance should be called on 000. A **P902** should be submitted as soon as practicable if considered work-related.

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1.10 Do I still need to get tested for COVID-19 after being vaccinated?

If a vaccine recipient is not a suspect case and develops fever, headache, fatigue or other mild systemic symptoms within and lasting for less than 48 hours after receipt of a COVID-19 vaccine in the absence of respiratory symptoms (including loss of smell), it is more likely that they have an expected vaccine response and testing may not be required.

If symptoms persist past 48 hours post vaccination, these individuals should get tested and follow all relevant post-testing instructions regardless of vaccination status. Again, if in doubt seek medical advice.

1.11 Do I need to provide my certificate or other proof of vaccination?

If required by a member's manager, supervisor or Commander, a member must provide vaccination evidence. Vaccinations will appear on the Medicare App if linked to MyGov. Ensure your vaccination records are up-to-date (including third dose / booster if applicable).

Please follow the user guide below to obtain proof of vaccination:

- https://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0010/846640/Get_proof_of_your_COVID-19_vaccination.pdf
- [https://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0003/846012/Record_of_COVID_19_Vaccination - SAP user guide.pdf](https://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0003/846012/Record_of_COVID_19_Vaccination_-_SAP_user_guide.pdf)

1.12 If I already have had COVID-19 and recovered, should I still get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when it's available?

Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection is possible, vaccine is still recommended for those who have recovered from COVID-19.

At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long. Seek medical advice from your treating practitioner to discuss any treatments you had before you get vaccinated.

For more information:

- <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/is-it-true/is-it-true-do-people-who-have-had-covid-19-and-recovered-need-to-get-vaccinated>
- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/media-resources/science-in-5/episode-50---do-i-still-need-the-vaccine-if-i-have-covid-19>

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1.13 I'm pregnant – is the vaccine safe for me and my baby?

The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) has further updated their advice on the issue of vaccination for pregnant and breastfeeding women and those planning pregnancy in line with Australian Technical Advisory Group (ATAGI):

Pregnant women are a priority group for COVID-19 vaccination and should be routinely offered Pfizer mRNA vaccine (Cominarty) or Spikevax (Moderna) at any stage of pregnancy.

Pregnant women with COVID-19 have a higher risk of severe illness compared to non-pregnant women with COVID-19 of the same age. This includes an increased risk of:

- hospitalisation
- admission to an intensive care unit
- invasive ventilation.

COVID-19 during pregnancy also increases the risk of complications for the baby including a higher risk of stillbirth and of being born prematurely.

Vaccination is the best way to reduce these risks.

Women who are trying to become pregnant can receive either Pfizer, Moderna or AstraZeneca vaccines and do not need to delay vaccination or avoid becoming pregnant after vaccination.

Officers / workers who are pregnant are encouraged to obtain medical advice from treating physicians prior to getting vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus.

Further information can be obtained from:

- <https://www.health.gov.au/news/joint-statement-between-ranzcog-and-atagi-about-covid-19-vaccination-for-pregnant-women>
- <https://ranzcog.edu.au/statements-guidelines/covid-19-statement/covid-19-vaccination-information>

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2 BOOSTER VACCINATION

2.1 Why is a booster needed?

Studies show that the immunity created by COVID-19 vaccines begins to wane over time. A booster dose strengthens your immune system and helps to maintain a high level of protection against serious illness from the COVID-19 virus infection.

ATAGI has published findings that a booster vaccine increases antibody levels substantially and that this will likely offer protection against both the Delta and Omicron variant.

2.2 Which vaccine/s will be used for booster vaccinations?

The Comirnaty (Pfizer) and Spikevax (Moderna) vaccines are approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and recommended by ATAGI as a COVID-19 booster dose.

Refer to the following links for more information:

- Department of Health - [Vaccine types for booster doses](#)
- [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\) recommendations on the use of a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine.](#)

2.3 When can I get a booster vaccination?

You are able to get your booster vaccination if you had **at least three months** after the completion of a COVID-19 vaccine primary series.

Refer to [COVID-19 booster vaccine](#) advice for more information.

2.4 How do I access the booster vaccine?

To access a service near you, a booster vaccination can be booked through the [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder](#) at your GP, participating community pharmacies or [NSW Health state-run clinics](#).

2.5 I'm immunocompromised and have had or am having a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Do I still need a booster?

Your third dose (part of your primary series) helps to build an immune response similar to people who are not immunosuppressed.

People who are immunocompromised and are recommended to receive a third primary dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Seek medical advice from your treating practitioner to further discuss situation before you get vaccinated. For more information, refer to [ATAGI recommendations on the use of a third primary dose of COVID-19 vaccine in individuals who are severely immunocompromised](#).

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2.6 What is the difference between a third dose and a booster?

A primary course of a vaccine is the number of doses it takes to achieve a good level of protection against a disease.

- For the COVID-19 vaccines available in Australia, a primary course is two doses for most people.
- For people who received a recognised overseas vaccine, a primary course could be one or two doses, depending on the type of vaccine.
- For some people who are immunocompromised due to certain treatments or conditions, a third dose is recommended as part of a primary course to achieve similar levels of protection.

A booster is an extra dose of a vaccine, given sometime after the primary course. It 'boosts' the immune system and helps to maintain a high level of protection from the disease.

- You may be familiar with other vaccines that have booster dose, such as tetanus and whooping cough (pertussis).

2.7 Will more doses be required?

Experts all over the world are tracking and researching the COVID-19 virus to better understand how long the vaccines will provide protection against COVID-19, as well as how well they protect against new variants of the virus as they emerge.

This evidence will help to inform whether further boosters will be needed in the future.

2.8 Do I still need to get a flu shot this year?

As previous years, NSWPF will offer an in-house influenza vaccine to its members in addition to GP practices and pharmacies.

Based on the [ATAGI Clinical Advice](#):

- Influenza vaccines can be co-administered (i.e. on the same day) with the COVID-19 vaccines.
- Flu vaccination is strongly recommended for vulnerable groups including adults aged ≥ 65 years, children 6 months to < 5 years of age, pregnant women, people with an increased risk of complications from influenza including those with underlying medical conditions, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ≥ 6 months of age.
- Due to the COVID-19 public health and social measures in Australia and internationally, the seasonal pattern of influenza was different in 2020 and 2021 from previous years, with considerably lower influenza virus circulation.
- With international borders gradually reopening and greater population movement, a resurgence of influenza activity is expected (potentially outside of the usual influenza season).

2.9 Will the vaccine give me COVID-19 virus?

No, you cannot get COVID-19 from a vaccine. The vaccine contains proteins or other biological substances to stimulate the immune response, but not the coronavirus itself. You are not contagious for COVID-19 after getting vaccinated.

2.10 Where can I find more information on the COVID-19 vaccination program?

Officers / workers can call the COVID-19 vaccination program hotline on **1800 955 566** between 8am-09:30pm, 7 days a week.

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3 REFERENCES

Australian Government – Department of Health

- [COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#)
- [Australia's COVID-19 vaccine national roll-out strategy](#)
- [How are vaccines shown to be safe? fact sheet](#)

Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)

- [COVID-19 vaccine approval process](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine: Information for consumers and health professionals](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccines undergoing evaluation](#)

Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI)

- [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\)](#)

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

- <https://ranzcog.edu.au/>

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Vaccines](#)

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

1. A total of 2,479 P902 notifications have been received relating to exposure/contracting COVID 19 and adverse reactions to COVID 19 vaccinations:

P902s – 01.09.2021 to 28.03.2022		
Exposure to COVID 19 / Contracted COVID 19	Adverse reactions to COVID 19 vaccination	Total
2,337	142	2,479

2. A total of 47 NSW Police Force staff have been granted a COVID 19 vaccine exemption.

COVID 19 vaccine exemptions – as of 07.04.2022		
Police (Sworn)	Admin (Unsworn)	Total
30	17	47

3. The latest version available for the *COVID-19 Vaccination Frequently Asked Questions* document on the NSW Police Force intranet is dated 25.02.2022, version 16 (see [attachment A](#)).