Preparing for COVID-19 vaccination

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Make sure your details are correct

While you wait for your appointment, there are some things you can do now to get ready.

Make sure your details are up to date with Medicare, if you are eligible (note that you can still have a COVID-19 vaccine if you are not eligible for Medicare). You can do this via:

- The Medicare online account through myGov
- The Express Plus Medicare app.
- Calling the Medicare program.

If you don't have your account set up, you can:

- Enrol in Medicare, if you're not already enrolled.
- Set up your Medicare online account, if you're enrolled in Medicare, but don't have Medicare linked to myGov.
- Get an Individual Health Identifier (IHI), if you're not eligible for Medicare.

Once you've had your vaccine, you'll be able to get an immunisation history statement to prove your vaccination status. You can find out how to get your immunisation history statement on the Services Australia website.

Getting ready for your appointment

There is a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines in Australia and globally. This means, people who have the highest risk of severe COVID-19 and/or exposure to the virus will receive the vaccine first. Other people will be vaccinated over time. Find out who will be prioritised for vaccination by visiting www.health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines. You can check to see if you can book a COVID-19 vaccination yet by visiting https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/.

You should **not** attend a COVID-19 vaccination appointment if you:

- are unwell with fever, cough, runny nose or other symptoms that could be from COVID-19
- are awaiting COVID-19 test results
- have tested positive with COVID-19 and you are in isolation
- are in quarantine
- are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

If you fall into any of the above categories, check with your immunisation provider. You may need to reschedule your appointment for vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines are not effective at treating COVID-19.

If you have had another vaccine in the 7 days before your COVID-19 vaccine appointment, tell your immunisation provider. Your immunisation provider may ask you to reschedule your appointment.

You are not required to test for COVID-19 before vaccination if you do not have a fever or any respiratory symptoms.

Plan ahead for two doses

It is important that you receive two doses of your COVID-19 vaccine. There should be at least three weeks between the two doses if you receive the COVID-19 Pfizer [Comirnaty] vaccine; there should be about 12 weeks between the two doses if you receive the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca. Optimal protection against COVID-19 will not occur until about one to two weeks after your second dose.

What to expect at your vaccination appointment

You should bring the following to your COVID-19 vaccination appointment:

- photo ID, if you have one
- Medicare card, if you have one
- employee ID, if you are getting a COVID-19 vaccine because of your occupation.
- information about any of your medical conditions, allergies, bleeding disorders or immunocompromise (i.e. weakened immune system)
- information about any medications you are taking
- information about any previous COVID-19 vaccine received (vaccine brand and date of vaccination)
- information about any reactions you have had to any vaccine in the past
- the name of your current GP/s and any specialist doctors you see
- a face mask (if required by your state/territory).

At your appointment, you will be able to discuss any questions you have about COVID-19 vaccinations with your immunisation provider.

Tell your immunisation provider if you are under the age of 60 years, if you have any medical conditions or if you are taking any medications. In particular, make sure to tell them if you:

- have had an allergic reaction to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or to an ingredient of the vaccine
- have had anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) to other vaccines or other medicines
- have had thrombosis with thrombocytopenia occurring after the first dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca
- other serious adverse events attributed to the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine
- have a history of heparin induced thrombocytopenia (HIT), central venous sinus thrombosis (CVST), blood clots in the abdominal veins or antiphospholipid syndrome with blood clots
- have a mast cell disorder
- have a bleeding disorder or are receiving anticoagulant therapy (a blood thinner)
- are pregnant
- are immunocompromised (i.e. have a weakened immune system or take immune suppressing medication)
- have had COVID-19 in the past, or have ongoing illness from COVID-19
- have received another COVID-19 vaccine (and which brand)
- have received any vaccine in the last 7 days

In some circumstances, it may be better to have a discussion with your healthcare provider about vaccination before making an appointment for vaccination. You can also read information about the specific vaccine you are receiving:

- *Information on COVID-19 Pfizer (Comirnaty) vaccine, or*
- *Information on COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca*

How you will receive the vaccine

You will receive the vaccine as an injection, most commonly into your upper arm muscle. You must remain in the vaccination clinic for observation for at least 15 minutes after vaccination. Depending on your medical history, you may be asked to wait in the clinic for 30 minutes.

How is the information you provide at your appointment used?

For information on how your personal details are collected, stored and used visit:
https://www.health.gov.au/using-our-websites/privacy/privacy-notice-for-covid-19-vaccinations