



Australian Government

COVID-19
✓ **VACCINATION**

COVID-19 vaccine



The AstraZeneca vaccine

Easy Read fact sheet



The Australian Government wrote this fact sheet.
When you see the word 'we', it means the
Australian Government.



We wrote this fact sheet in an easy to read way.
We use pictures to explain some ideas.



You can ask for help to read
this fact sheet. A friend, family
member or support person
may be able to help you.



What is this fact sheet about?

A **vaccine** is a type of medicine that:



- helps people fight a virus if they come into contact with it
- can stop people from getting very sick from the virus.



The COVID-19 vaccine is a safe way to protect:

- you
- your family
- the community.

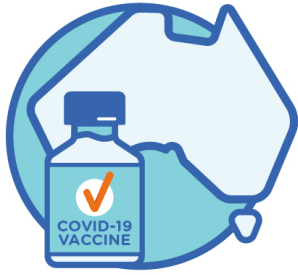


A **vaccination** is when you receive an injection of the vaccine. This is done with a needle.



You can bring someone you trust with you to your COVID-19 vaccination, such as a:

- family member
- friend
- support worker or carer.



We want to give everyone in Australia a chance to have a COVID-19 vaccination.



Scientists around the world have made different COVID-19 vaccines.



In Australia, the **Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)** approves all vaccines before they can be used.



The TGA is a group of **independent** medical experts.



This means they make their own decisions using the scientific information they have.



The TGA makes sure the medicines we use in Australia work well.



The TGA only approves vaccines that:

- are safe
- work well.



The TGA has approved the AstraZeneca vaccine.



The AstraZeneca vaccine teaches your body how to:

- know if COVID-19 is there
- fight COVID-19.



The AstraZeneca vaccine doesn't have any COVID-19 in it.



You can't get the virus from the vaccine.

Why is the AstraZeneca vaccine only for people aged 60 years or older?



There is a team of medical experts called the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).



ATAGI said only people aged 60 years or older should have the AstraZeneca vaccine.



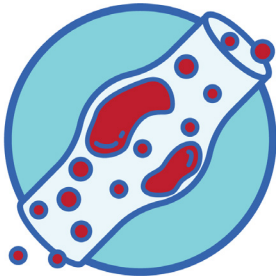
They said this because a very small number of people have had a serious **side effect** from the AstraZeneca vaccine.



A side effect is something that can happen when you take medicine.



But this side effect is rare.



This side effect can cause **blood clots**.



When blood gets thick, we call it a blood clot.



There are safe blood clots, like when you get a small cut and it stops bleeding.



But there are also blood clots that are not safe.



This side effect can cause blood clots that are not safe.

We call it a serious side effect.



This side effect is very rare but it can make people very sick.



You can talk to your doctor if you think you might be at risk of getting serious blood clots.



ATAGI says the AstraZeneca vaccine is still safe.



The AstraZeneca vaccine still does a good job of teaching your body how to fight COVID-19.



But ATAGI has made some rules.

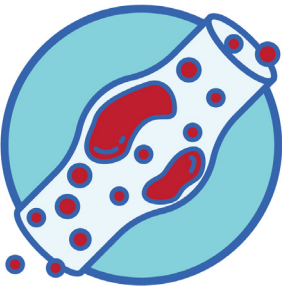


We need these rules so there is less chance that people will get serious side effects.



ATAGI says you should get a different vaccine if you are aged under 60 years.

ATAGI made this decision because people aged 60 years or older have a:



- lower chance of getting a serious blood clot



- higher chance of getting very sick from COVID-19.



If you are under 60 years old, you can have your second dose of AstraZeneca if you have already had your first dose of AstraZeneca.



You can still have your second dose of AstraZeneca if you had some side effects that weren't serious.



You can't have your second dose of AstraZeneca if you had a serious side effect from your first dose.



You can talk to your doctor to check if the AstraZeneca vaccine is right for you.

Getting your 2 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine



You need to get 2 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine for it to work in the right way.



Usually you should get the second dose 12 weeks after the first dose.



But we have a new type of COVID-19 now.

It's called the **Delta strain**.

We have changed our advice for:



- who can get the AstraZeneca vaccine



- when you can get your second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.



You can find out more in our Delta strain fact sheet on the Department of Health website at

www.health.gov.au/covid-19-vaccination-easy-read-resources



You need to get 2 doses of the same vaccine.



You should only have 1 type of COVID-19 vaccine.



If you had a serious side effect from your first dose, you should talk to your doctor before you have your second dose.



Even if you get the AstraZeneca vaccine, there is a chance you still might catch COVID-19 from other people.



If you catch COVID-19 after you get the AstraZeneca vaccine, you won't get as sick from the virus.

This means you still need to:



- stay at least 1.5m away from other people



- wash your hands often with soap and water.



If you can't wash your hands, use hand sanitiser.



You still need to wear a mask if your state or territory government says you should.

If you feel sick with the symptoms of COVID-19,
you need to:



- stay at home



- get a COVID-19 test.

Is the AstraZeneca vaccine safe?



Researchers have run large **clinical trials** of the AstraZeneca vaccine.



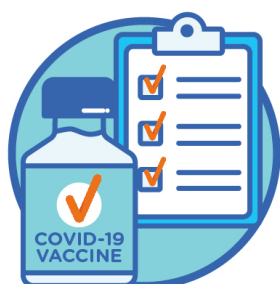
A clinical trial is research to test if a vaccine:

- is safe
- works well.

In a clinical trial, researchers:



- give people the vaccine



- keep track of these people to make sure the vaccine works well.



Over 60,000 people are taking part in the AstraZeneca vaccine clinical trial.



In the United Kingdom, more than 1.5 million people have already received 2 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine.



All of the evidence tells us that getting 2 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine helps most people to fight COVID-19.



But a small amount of people have had a serious side effect.

They have had the blood clots we talked about on page 5–6.

But this side effect is rare.

Who should not have the AstraZeneca vaccination?



You should not have the AstraZeneca vaccine if you have certain conditions that cause serious blood clots.



You can talk to your doctor if you don't know if you have certain conditions that cause serious blood clots.



You should not have the AstraZeneca vaccine if you had a strong **allergic reaction** to any of the ingredients in this vaccine in the past.



An allergic reaction is when your body reacts to something, such as food or medicine.

An allergic reaction could be:



- an itchy rash



- you find it hard to breathe



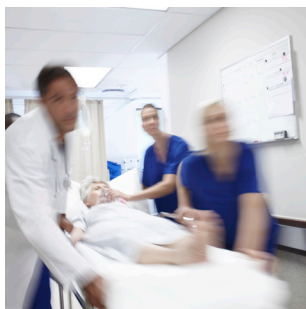
- your lips or tongue get bigger



- your heart beats faster.



Anaphylaxis is a strong allergic reaction.



Strong allergic reactions are rare. But they can be life-threatening.



You might need to talk to your doctor before you make an appointment for the AstraZeneca vaccination.



You should tell your doctor if you have ever had an allergic reaction to any vaccine or medicine in the past.

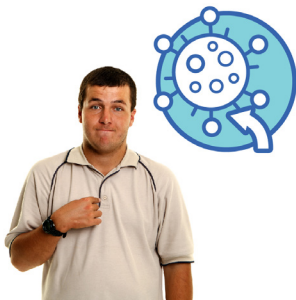


You should not have a second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine if you have a strong allergic reaction to the first dose.

You should talk to your doctor first if you:



- are pregnant



- have had COVID-19 before.

You should talk to your doctor if you have:



- any allergies
- anaphylaxis.



You should talk to your doctor if you are taking any kind of medicine that thins your blood.



You should also talk to your doctor if you are **immunocompromised**.



If you are immunocompromised, you have a weakened immune system.

This means it is harder for your body to fight:



- infections



- other diseases.



You might need to have the AstraZeneca vaccine on a different day if you have had any other vaccines in the last 7 days.



Even if you have any of the conditions we talk about above, you might still be able to have the AstraZeneca vaccination.



You can talk to your doctor about what is right for you.



Or you can ask your support person to put you in touch with a doctor.



If your doctor tells you that you can't have the AstraZeneca vaccine, you can have a different COVID-19 vaccine.



But you might need to wait until we have more doses. We have a limited amount at the moment.

More information



You can call the Disability Gateway on **1800 643 787**.

They are open from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday.



You can visit the Department of Health website at www.health.gov.au for more information about the vaccine.



You can call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on **1800 020 080**.



If you need information in a language other than English, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450**.



If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can call the National Relay Service on **133 677**.



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