COVID-19 vaccine information for people with disability and disability service providers

Stakeholder Kit August 2022

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Contents

Overview

This stakeholder kit has key messages to help with COVID-19 vaccine information for people with disability and disability service providers. This kit will help you easily share information with your contacts and includes links to materials such as videos and factsheets.

You can help keep Australians with disability safe from COVID-19

People with disability are at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19.

To receive the best protection against serious illness or death from COVID-19, you should stay up to date with all vaccinations recommended for your age or individual health needs. Boosters are important to maintain this protection.

Vaccination protects individuals, family members, and vulnerable people in the community from severe complications of COVID-19.

The Disability Gateway can help you to make a booking to get your COVID-19 vaccine. Call **1800 643 787**, Monday to Friday **8am to 8pm**.

Information about COVID-19 vaccines for people with disability is available in:

- ✓ **Auslan**
- ✓ **Easy Read**

Vaccines save lives – it's not too late to get a shot

- Vaccines reduce the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 by more than 80%
- COVID-19 vaccines are free and available for everyone aged 6 months and older.
- The latest information on COVID-19 vaccination is available from the Department of Health and Aged care.
- Regular updates are also provided through **Disability provider alerts.**

COVID-19 oral treatments

Eligibility criteria for treatment has been expanded so that more people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will be able to access life-saving oral antiviral treatments.

Timing is critical with taking oral treatment. COVID-19 treatments are most effective if started as soon as possible.

It is important to start the medication within **5 days** of being diagnosed, or developing symptoms.

- You will need to speak to your GP, nurse practitioner or pharmacist about getting a prescription for oral treatments.

It is a good idea to plan ahead and have a conversation with your GP about the best options for you if you become sick with COVID-19. This includes looking into oral treatment. If there is a plan in place, it will be easier for you to access help if you need to isolate. If your doctor recommends oral antiviral treatments, you will need a prescription. The medications are available at your local pharmacy with a prescription. Your doctor can send the pharmacist your prescription electronically so the medications can be either collected by a friend or family member (you will be in isolation having tested positive) or delivered to your home.

Find your **nearest pharmacy** with the oral treatments. If you are worried about your symptoms and can't leave home or you don't have a regular GP, you can visit **healthdirect.gov.au**.

- Learn more about eligibility for **oral COVID-19 treatments**

- Learn about oral treatments for **COVID-19 and who is prioritised to receive them**.

COVID-19 Fourth Dose

A fourth dose is now available for selected population groups (below) who are at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and who have received their primary vaccination course and first booster dose.

You are eligible for a Pfizer COVID-19 booster dose if you:

- are 12 to 15, and:
    - are **severely immunocompromised**, or
    - have a disability with significant or complex health needs, or
    - have severe, complex, or multiple health conditions that increase the risk of severe COVID-19
- are 16 years and older, and
- completed your primary dose course of COVID-19 vaccination at least **3** months ago.

If you are aged 18 years or older, you can have the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine as a booster dose regardless of which vaccine you had for your first 2 doses.

If you have had COVID-19 you should wait to be vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine for 3 months after your confirmed infection.

The date you had your last COVID-19 vaccine is on your COVID-19 **digital certificate**.

- Learn more about **COVID-19 booster vaccine advice**.
- Learn more about **COVID-19 vaccine information for people with disability and disability service providers**.

COVID-19 booster vaccine advice

COVID-19 boosters help to maintain immunity against COVID-19.

Learn more about COVID-19 vaccines, when you need one and how to get it.

- **Staying up to date**
- **How to book**
- **Booster doses**
- **Benefits of a booster doses**
- **Safety of COVID-19 booster doses**

Assistance with booking a vaccination

Assistance for people with disability and their families, friends and providers is available through the *Disability Gateway*, you can call on **1800 643 787** between the hours of 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday.

You can access the *Easy Vaccine Access* service – SMS Text *'Hey EVA'* to **0481 611 382**. Learn more about **EVA.**

Vaccination Clinic Finder

The **Vaccine Clinic Finder** is available to help find and book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment. When searching for a suitable appointment, the Vaccine Clinic Finder has icons to assist with accessibility needs.

- **Wheelchair accessible** - This location supports the needs of people who are using a wheelchair or have limited mobility.
- **No Medicare card needed** - People without Medicare can get a COVID-19 vaccine at this location.
- **No appointment needed** - walk-ins accepted
- **Low sensory space available** - This location has a quiet room and/or low sensory space available.
- **Languages other than English** - Some staff at this location can communicate in the languages listed.

Find a clinic and book now.

Booking a vaccination in your own language

i. You can call the *National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline* on **1800 020 080**. This is a free service.

  ✓ People with disability, their families and carers should select Option 5

  ✓ Disability workers should select Option 4

  ✓ For information in a language other than English, select option 8.

ii. The *Translating and Interpreting Service* is also available on **131 450**.

  For people who are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, call the National Relay Service on **133 677**.

COVID-19 vaccination staying up to date - people with disability living in shared residential accommodation

Commonwealth vaccination providers are contacting residential disability service providers to offer in-reach for COVID-19 vaccination. If residents are due for their next dose, please book in as soon as possible.
To get more support you can also **contact us.**

COVID-19 Planning

Having a COVID-19 plan in place is important for people with disability. Collaborating 4 Inclusion has worked with the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care to develop a range of resources to help people with disability, and their families and carers, tailor a plan specific to their needs.

Visit the **Collaborating 4 Inclusion** website for further information.

COVID-19 Outbreak Management

In the event of a COVID-19 diagnosis, it can be overwhelming for the individual, carers, families and workers with knowing how to manage the situation. A **COVID-19 ready kit** is available to help make a plan for these situations.

If you are a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider, you can visit the **NDIS Commission website** for more information and guidance to help you to meet your obligations in relation to COVID-19 and managing outbreaks.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment protects the wearer from infection and stops the spread of COVID-19.

The **Department of Health and Aged Care** has information available to help you find out who should use PPE, how to use it, and how supply, if needed, is managed through the National Medical Stockpile.

For further information on supports available through the NDIS take a look at **Your health and safety**.

COVID-19 and Mental Health

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, physical distancing and isolation may cause feelings of anxiousness, stress and worry.

Mental health support is available for all Australians.

Eligible individuals can access up to 20 Medicare subsidised individual support sessions and 10 group support sessions each calendar year.

These additional sessions are available until 31 December 2022. **Read more about receiving 10 additional mental health sessions during COVID-19**.

The following services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, anywhere in Australia:

- Lifeline
- Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service
- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)
- Kids helpline
- Suicide Call Back Service

Visit the Department of Health and Aged Care website to **learn more about mental health support services available**.

You can also access tips to help mental health from the **Council for Intellectual Disability**.

Communication materials – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The Department of Health and Aged Care has a **collection of COVID-19 vaccines communication materials,** including social media content, posters and videos, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

Australian Government Department of Health YouTube

You can access useful information from the official **YouTube channel for the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.**

Here are a few useful videos:

- COVID-19 Oral Antiviral Treatments

- COVID-19 vaccination – How to speak to kids about COVID-19 vaccines | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care
- Get a booster to stay up to date

Facts about COVID-19 – is it true?

With so much information available, it can be hard to get the facts. Here are some common myths and the facts about COVID-19.

The Australian Department of Health and Aged Care have provided **facts on COVID-19 vaccines**.

Children and Teenagers

- Children don't need to be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- My child has had COVID-19. They need to wait 3 months before getting their booster.
- Do children 5-11 years only need one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine?
- Do adults and children who have had COVID-19 need to get vaccinated?
- Do kids need to get vaccinated if they don't get severely ill from COVID-19?

COVID-19 vaccination

- How long does it take to have immunity after vaccination?
- How long will the COVID-19 vaccine last once I have had two doses?
- Are COVID-19 vaccines mandatory in Australia?
- Do I have to wait between getting the Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 vaccine?
- Do people have to receive two doses and do they have to be the same type of COVID-19 vaccine for it to be effective?
- Should you take blood thinning medication before having the AstraZeneca vaccine?
- Were COVID-19 vaccines developed too quickly to be safe?
- Were COVID-19 vaccines rushed through approvals or given emergency use authorisations in Australia?

Vaccination Clinics

- Vaccination clinics are not culturally appropriate
- Vaccination clinics don't factor in the needs of people with disability
- Vaccination clinics are not available in rural and regional areas

COVID-19 vaccination side effects

- The side effects of the vaccine are just as bad as having COVID-19?
- COVID-19 vaccines cause autism?
- Does the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine cause blood clots?
- Are COVID-19 vaccines not effective?
- Does the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine contain animal DNA?
- Does injecting into the bloodstream instead of muscle cause TTS or myocarditis?
- Do COVID-19 vaccines contain a microchip or any kind of tracking technology?
- Can COVID-19 vaccines alter my DNA?
- Do COVID-19 vaccines cause autoimmune diseases?
- Do COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility?

COVID-19 virus

- Hot weather kills the COVID-19 virus

Booking a vaccination

- There are many ways you can book a vaccine appointment

Additional Resources

The Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care has a range of resources to help spread the message on the importance of vaccination.

- COVID-19 Vaccination Easy Read Resources
- COVID-19 Easy Ready Resources
- COVID-19 vaccination – Disability provider alerts | Australian Government Department of Health
- Information for disability service providers about COVID-19 vaccines | Australian Government Department of Health
- NDIS Code of Conduct NDIS Providers - promotes safe and ethical service delivery by setting out expectations for the conduct of both NDIS providers and workers.

Maintaining a safe workplace – Mental Health

- Mental Health | Safe Work Australia (swa.gov.au)
- Supporting you through the Coronavirus pandemic - Beyond Blue
- Disability discrimination | Australian Human Rights Commission

Maintaining a safe workplace – exposure to COVID-19

- NDIS Commission coronavirus (COVID-19) information | NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Duties under WHS laws | Safe Work Australia (swa.gov.au)
- Occupational health and safety (Victoria) – your legal duties - WorkSafe

Resources for Infection Prevention and Control

- Infection, Prevention and Control Training
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): Outbreak preparedness, prevention and management
- Information for Disability Support Providers and Workers NDIS Commission resources page
- NDIS Commission resources page
- COVID-19 infection control training
- CDNA national guidelines for the prevention and management of COVID-19 outbreaks in disability residential services
- Minimising the risk of infectious respiratory disease transmission in the context of COVID-19 the hierarchy of controls
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines for infection prevention and control in residential care facilities

Mental Health

- How are you feeling today?
- Help and support for your mental wellbeing
- Looking after your mental health and wellbeing
- Help when you need it – supporting your mental health during mandatory quarantine
- Mental health and wellbeing support for employees during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Information for health and mental health workers supporting people with disability