

COVID-19 Vaccine update from SA Health

Important: This information is current as of Tuesday 23 March 2021

Vaccine rollout

[Phase 1b](#) of the COVID-19 vaccination program commenced yesterday. Eligible groups in 1b include all remaining health care workers, adults over 70, critical and high-risk workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults over 55, and people with a specified underlying medical condition.

The [South Australian Phase 1b rollout plan](#) outlines these groups and where they can get vaccinated.

94 South Australian GPs, Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Services, and GP-led respiratory clinics have joined the vaccination rollout. This number will progressively increase in the coming weeks as more vaccine providers come on board.

South Australians can check their eligibility and locate a vaccination provider by using the Commonwealth Government [vaccine eligibility checker](#).

Vaccination appointments may be limited until more GPs come online and prepare their clinics.

As of Monday 22 March, over 280,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been administered in Australia, SA Health had administered over 15,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine across metropolitan and regional South Australia and over 439 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been given globally.

Guided by the Australian national rollout strategy, SA Health has released the [South Australian COVID-19 vaccination rollout](#).

The phase 1a rollout continues concurrently with phase 1b, ensuring that the most at risk continue to be vaccinated.

Second dose

It is important to get both doses of vaccine to ensure the best protection.

Pfizer doses are to be given a minimum of 3 weeks apart and Astra Zeneca doses are recommended to be given 12 weeks apart. The difference in intervals between the vaccines is due to higher efficacy seen after a longer interval between doses with the Astra Zeneca vaccine. If a delay occurs, it's important to still have the second dose to ensure greater protection.

The vaccines are not interchangeable and the two-dose course must be completed with the same vaccine.

Aged Care, older people and people with a disability

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout is continuing for staff and residents in residential aged care facilities operated by Local Health Networks (LHNs). The Commonwealth Government continues to vaccinate aged care staff and residents in Commonwealth Government operated residential aged care facilities in South Australia.

From Monday 22 March, all South Australians over 70 years are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout is continuing for South Australians living with disability and their frontline carers in residential care facilities.

From Monday 22 March, people with a disability who attend centre-based services (e.g. day programs, supported employment) are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. From Monday 22 March, essential carers (paid and unpaid) including carers who are also family members of someone with disability or an elderly person, are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccine safety

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the United Kingdom (UK) Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) have completed preliminary reviews of the risk of blood clots in people vaccinated with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine overseas. These reviews have found the benefits of the vaccine continue to outweigh the risks, and the vaccine is not associated with an increase in the overall risk of blood clots.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) attended the review meeting and has released a [statement](#).

The Australian Government and SA Health remain confident in continuing to use the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to protect the South Australian community.

SA Health are using both the Pfizer and Astra Zeneca vaccines to vaccinate South Australians in Phase 1a.

Both the vaccines have met the extremely high safety standards set by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, undergoing the full approval requirements and have a good safety profile in clinical trials and in surveillance with widespread use in populations overseas.

Chief Public Health Officer, Professor Nicola Spurrier talks about the safety and testing of COVID-19 vaccines in a new [video](#).

Efficacy

With over 439 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine given around the world, data is showing high effectiveness for both vaccines. Professor in Vaccinology at the University of Adelaide and Women's and Children's Hospital Senior Medical Practitioner, Professor Helen Marshall said that in Scotland, real-world results show high effectiveness against COVID-19 hospitalisations for both vaccines: 94% reduction for the Astra Zeneca and an 85% reduction for the Pfizer vaccine. South Australians can be confident they are both safe and provide the protection against serious illness promised in the earlier trials.

Professor Nicola Spurrier answers some of the top questions around the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines in a new [video](#).

Safety

The person vaccinating you will have completed COVID-19 vaccination training. In South Australia, two trained staff members check the dosage prior to vaccination as an additional safety measure.

Vaccine recipients may be followed up with an automated text message three days and then eight days after the vaccine. They will be asked if they have had any side effects, and the information will contribute to AusVaxSafety's national COVID-19 vaccine safety surveillance. AusVaxSafety is a world-leading national vaccine safety system, led by the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance.

Vaccination certificates

Australians can already access their immunisation history statement through the Australian Immunisation Register for proof of vaccination, both digitally and in hard copy, if required.

Statements can be viewed on an individual's Medicare online account or via the Medicare app. Your immunisation history statement will record your COVID-19 vaccinations, following each dose.

Roll up South Australia

To encourage South Australians to 'Roll up' when it's their turn to get vaccinated, SA Health has launched an [advertising campaign](#) across TV, digital, radio and print.

A range of resources including posters, email banner and a brochure is available at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/RollUpResources.

COVID-19 vaccination program and vaccine FAQs

The SA Health Frequently Asked Questions are frequently updated as new information becomes available. For more information about COVID-19 vaccines and the rollout in South Australia visit sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidvaccinefaqs

Play your part in the fight against COVID-19 and roll up

The COVID-19 vaccine will be an important tool in our fight against COVID-19 and all eligible South Australians will have access to a vaccine in the coming months.

The vaccine is safe, effective and will be provided for free.

The vaccine will be one of the most important tools to protect our community, however all need to continue to be COVID Safe:

- Practise good hygiene
- Practise physical distancing
- Stay home and get tested when sick
- Check in to venues and events using the COVID SAfe Check-In.

SA Health is your trusted source for information on the South Australian COVID-19 vaccination program. For up to date information visit our [website](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

The Australian Government Department of Health also had a range of information about COVID-19 vaccines available on their [website](#).

The National Coronavirus Helpline is the front door for all vaccine enquiries for the community and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 1800 020 080.