

Last updated 31 August 2021

## Information for Mental Health Consumers, Carers and Support Services

This fact sheet provides answers to commonly asked questions for people living with a severe mental health condition who are being vaccinated or considering being vaccinated against COVID-19.

### When can I get vaccinated?

All people 16 years and over are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

### I am having my depot injection this week. Can I have my COVID-19 vaccination at the same time?

No. It is recommended that you don't have the COVID-19 vaccination on the same day as your depot injection - this is precautionary to minimise the chance of any side effects.

### I am on clozapine – can I have the COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes. There is no restriction on you having the vaccination while taking clozapine.

Once you do have the vaccination you will need to keep in regular contact with the clozapine coordinator or GP nurse to monitor any side effects that you may experience for the first week after vaccination.

Tell the clozapine coordinator or GP practice when you are having your vaccination so they can monitor you over the first week after the vaccination, just to be sure.

### Do I get to choose what type of COVID-19 vaccine I get?

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommend:

- > The Pfizer vaccine for people 12 – 59 years of age.
- > The AstraZeneca vaccine for people aged 60 years and over.

### Where can I get the vaccination?

There are a range of places to get vaccinated including SA Health vaccination clinics and participating GPs, pharmacies, respiratory clinics and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services. If you are not sure which clinic you can ask your carer, support person or mental health team to assist you in making an appointment.

## **Are the vaccines safe?**

The COVID-19 vaccines have met the extremely high safety standards set by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

The TGA approves all vaccines, prescription medicines and medical devices used in Australia. This means the COVID-19 vaccines have been thoroughly assessed and found to be as safe as any other vaccine or medicine you take.

The vaccines have been through rigorous clinical trials where they were tested on tens of thousands of people. Now, billions of people across the world have received a COVID-19 vaccine.

## **Can the vaccines give me COVID-19?**

No, the COVID-19 vaccines do not use the live or whole virus that causes COVID-19.

## **What are some of the common side effects I might experience after my COVID-19 vaccine?**

You may experience some side effects following vaccination. This is very normal. Most side effects last no more than a couple of days and you will recover without any problems.

Common reactions to vaccination include pain, redness and/or swelling where you received the needle, mild fever, headache and flu-like symptoms.

Serious reactions such as allergic reactions are extremely rare.

If you have any general questions or concerns, speak to your GP or you can also call the SA COVID-19 Information Line on 1800 253 787 from 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week.

## **Do I have to get two doses?**

You need two doses of COVID-19 vaccine to make sure you are fully vaccinated.

The length of time between your two doses will depend on which COVID-19 vaccine you receive. You will receive the same type of vaccine both times. When you receive your first dose, you will be asked to make an appointment to get your second dose.

## **What if I want to get the flu shot?**

Getting vaccinated against the flu each year is important to protect yourself and your loved ones.

You can get the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine— you just need to allow one week (7 days) between your vaccinations. You should have your flu vaccine as soon as possible.

## **Do I still need to practice hand hygiene and physical distancing even if I've been vaccinated?**

It is very important that we continue practising good hygiene, using the COVID SAfe Check-In, physical distancing, and getting tested and staying home if you are unwell, especially during the roll out of the vaccine program, which will take some time.

## Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am planning a pregnancy, currently pregnant or breastfeeding?

If you are pregnant, you can receive the COVID-19 vaccine. You should discuss the COVID-19 vaccine with your doctor.

If you are planning a pregnancy, you can receive the COVID-19 vaccine. You do not need to avoid becoming pregnant before or after vaccination.

If you are breastfeeding, you can receive the COVID-19 vaccine at any time. You do not need to stop breastfeeding before or after vaccination.

### More information

The SA Health website has [frequently asked questions](#) about the COVID-19 vaccine on the website. For more information visit [www.covidvaccine.sa.gov.au](http://www.covidvaccine.sa.gov.au)

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccines, visit the [Australian Government Department of Health](#) website, which also has a range of [translated information](#).

The National COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 1800 020 080.

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### For more information

**SA COVID-19 COVID-19 Information Line 1800 020 080**  
**SA COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line 1800 632 753**  
**[covidvaccine.sa.gov.au](http://covidvaccine.sa.gov.au)**

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