

## General Information about the COVID-19 Vaccine

People who have a COVID-19 vaccination have a much lower chance of getting sick from the disease called COVID-19.

Medical experts have studied COVID-19 vaccines to make sure they are safe. Most side effects are mild and don't last for long. As with any vaccine or medicine, there may be rare and/or unknown side effects.

The COVID-19 vaccination is free and you choose whether to have the vaccination or not.

Due to a limited supply of the Covid-19 vaccine it is currently only available to be given in General Practice to people identified by the Australian Government as priority groups and there are a restricted number of appointments available. It is expected that as Covid-19 vaccine supplies increase we will be able to offer it to more people.

To check your eligibility go to: <https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/> or ask at reception.

You will be given the Astra Zeneca COVID-19 vaccine by injection into your upper arm muscle. You will need 2 doses with a 12 week interval between injections for optimal protection, unless otherwise directed by your doctor. Ideally both doses will be given at the same medical centre.

## Booking your appointment

You can book your appointment online, via the EasyVisit app by telephone or at reception.

Appointments are released in line with our COVID-19 vaccine supply. If there are no appointments available please check back or call in one week.

Appointments for the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose appointments will be made at the time you receive your first dose.

Appointments are in high demand so please contact the centre as soon as possible if you need to cancel or re-schedule.

## Preparing for your appointment

COVID Vaccine clinics are specifically for the purpose of COVID-19 vaccination and matters not related to the COVID vaccine will not be addressed during your appointment.

This information is to help you be prepared for you appointment.

- Make an appointment with your GP prior to your vaccine clinic appointment if you have any questions or concerns about getting the COVID-19 vaccine
- Ensure your appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine is not less than 14 days after the flu vaccine, or any other vaccine.
- If you are a new patient to the practice you or a health care or critical worker must bring evidence of your eligibility to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. For example:
  - Proof of age (driver's license, passport)
  - A health summary or referral from your usual GP if you have a chronic disease
  - Proof of occupation if you are a health care worker or critical worker (defence, police, emergency services, fire and meat processing) e.g.; ID from your workplace
- Please bring a health summary from your usual GP if you are not already a patient of our practice. This will assist us to assess your suitability for the COVID vaccine.
- If you are taking anticoagulants (blood thinners) please bring the name and dose of your medication and your most recent INR result.
- Bring your Medicare Card to your appointment
- If you have access to a printer you can print and complete the Patient Pre-screening and Consent Form before your appointment and bring it with you on the day
- If you need to cancel or postpone your appointment for any reason please contact the Medical Centre as soon as possible.

## What to expect on the day

- Our Practice observes physical distancing requirements, depending on State legislation and any Covid outbreaks at the time you may be asked to wear a mask.
- If you feel unwell or have Covid type symptoms do not attend the Covid Vaccine Clinic.
- Arrive promptly at your allocated appointment time.
  - If you are new to the practice please arrive 10 minutes early to complete a registration form
- All patients will be provided with a Covid Vaccine pre-screening and consent form to read and complete in the waiting room (if not already started at home).
- A nurse and/ or doctor will review your suitability for the Covid Vaccine and provide you with information. You will also have opportunity to ask any questions
- You must consent to receiving the vaccine before we can administer it
- You will be given information about what to expect after the vaccine and an appointment will be made for you to return for your 2<sup>nd</sup> dose about 12 weeks later.
- You will need to remain in the practice for observation for at least 15 minutes after the vaccine was given just in case any adverse effects develop
- There are no restrictions on driving after the observation period unless you feel unwell.

## Pre-screening questions

Your suitability to receive the Covid-19 vaccine depends on many factors including your medical history and current health status. Particularly we will ask you about:

- If you have any allergies including if you have ever had an anaphylactic reaction (a severe allergic reaction)
- If you have certain medical conditions such as a weakened immune system or blood disorders and any medications you take
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- If you have any current illnesses such as a sore throat or fever
- If and when you have any previous vaccines, including the Covid-19 Vaccine

If you answer yes to any of these questions it may not mean you can't be given the vaccine however you may want to discuss your suitability with your GP before the appointment.

## What to expect after the Vaccine

Mild to moderate adverse reactions after the Covid-19 vaccine are not uncommon but these usually resolve within a few days. The most common symptoms include discomfort or swelling at the injection site, headache, fever and chills, tiredness, muscle and joint pain and nausea. Usually these resolve without any treatment though you can take paracetamol for pain or fever if you wish.

More severe symptoms, such as anaphylaxis, have rarely been reported to occur. As with any vaccine or medicine, there may be rare and/or unknown side effects.

Because the Covid-19 vaccine is a new vaccine the Therapeutic Goods Authority (TGA) is monitoring all side effects very closely. Anyone who experiences even mild side effects should report them to the TGA or their health care provider.

## Further Information

For further information on the Covid-19 vaccines go to: <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines>