



Department of Education and Training

2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Telephone: 03 9637 2000
DX210083

Dear Parents and Carers

Children aged 5 to 11 can now be booked in to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. This includes 5-year-olds attending early childhood education and care services.

Many state-run vaccination sites across Victoria are being transformed into an Australian-themed 'forest of protection' creating a friendly environment for children aged 5 to 11 years to receive their vaccination.

State vaccination centres will feature fun imagery of native Australian animals, as well as entertainers, activities and showbags designed to help make the vaccination experience positive for children and their families.

The first set of forest-themed sites will be located at Melton Vaccination Hub (indoor and drive-through), Campbellfield Ford Complex, Cranbourne Turf Club, Sandown Racecourse, Frankston Community Vaccination Hub, Geelong's Former Ford Factory, Shepparton Showgrounds and Traralgon Racecourse.

COVID-19 vaccinations will be available at participating general practices (GPs), pharmacies and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.

The vaccine is one third of the adult dose and will be delivered at 2 appointments, expected to be 8 weeks apart. The time between the two doses can be shortened in special circumstances, such as in an outbreak response, prior to the initiation of significant immunosuppression or for international travel.

You are strongly encouraged to book your child or children in to receive their first vaccination in January.

Some children will already be 5 at the start of the year, while others will turn 5 over the year – families should book their children in for vaccination as soon as possible after their fifth birthday.

COVID-19 vaccines have been tested, and shown to be safe and effective in protecting against serious illness and reducing the likelihood of COVID-19 spreading. They are important to protect you and your loved ones from COVID-19 and to reduce disruption to your child's early childhood education.

Vaccination is not mandatory to attend early childhood services, but it is highly encouraged to keep all children safe.

How to book an appointment

Visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine. Bookings can also be made via the Coronavirus Hotline on [1800 675 398](tel:1800675398) or via your local pharmacy or GP.

You will be able to book a vaccine appointment at a participating general practice (GPs), pharmacy or community health service, or at family-friendly state vaccination centres through the [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#).

Victorian Coronavirus Hotline

The Victorian Department of Health's [Coronavirus Hotline](#) 1800 675 398 can assist you with bookings at general practice (GPs), pharmacy and family-friendly state vaccination centres, and help with any questions you have about vaccination.

What to bring

For information on what to bring to a vaccine appointment please visit [Checklist: before your COVID-19 vaccination](#).

Support for children with disability or special requirements

There is [extra support](#) for children with disabilities and specialist requirements to access COVID-19 vaccinations.

Children who get vaccinated at state vaccination sites will receive a showbag with goodies that can help with distraction, including a colouring-in book by First Nations artist Emma Bamblett, coloured pencils, stickers and fidget spinners.

The decoration has been developed with children and parents, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Children will also be able to place a leaf with their name on it on the 'eucalyptus vaccination tree' that grows with every child vaccinated, with parents also able to add a leaf after receiving their third dose.

The state-run sites have been designed to cater for children who need additional support during their vaccination process such as a visual distraction, virtual reality headsets and the Buzzy Bees ice pack. The child-friendly vaccination hubs also provide low-sensory booths and are able to cater for specific needs.

Parents of children with disability who need extra assistance to access a vaccination should contact specialist [Disability Liaison Officers](#) who can help make the process easier.

The [Association for Children with a Disability](#) will hold a Facebook live session for families with children with additional needs on Tuesday 11 January at 10.30am. [Register online](#).

More information

Resources are available to help you and your child or children prepare for the vaccination:

- [Needle phobia - The Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre \(MVEC\) \(mcri.edu.au\)](https://mcri.edu.au)
- [Tips to help a child afraid of needles and stop it becoming a phobia - ABC Everyday](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination social scripts - Amaze - Autism resource](#)
- [Sesame Street ABC of COVID vaccines](#)

The Victorian Government's coronavirus website also has [information about COVID-19 vaccines in 63 community languages](#).

To ensure the safest start to 2022 for your child or children, I encourage you to help them get vaccinated before the end of January.

Yours sincerely

Bronwen Fitzgerald
Acting Deputy Secretary
Early Childhood Education
6 / 1 / 2022