

What you need to know about COVID-19 vaccines

Why are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people some of the first people to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Many of our people live with chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease and have a higher chance of becoming very sick or dying from COVID-19. Also, many of us live together with many people in the same house and there is more chance of COVID-19 being passed on.

When can I get my COVID-19 vaccine?

Free vaccinations are now available through your local Aboriginal Medical Service or GP for our people aged 50 and over or anyone over 18 years with chronic health conditions like diabetes, heart and lung conditions. To find out if you are eligible have a yarn with an Aboriginal Health Worker, nurse or GP at your local Aboriginal Medical Service or your local GP.

Which COVID-19 vaccine will I get?

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 and over will be given the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine will be given to people under 50. It's already been given to some of our mob who were at high risk of becoming very sick if they got COVID-19, such as our Elders and those with chronic health conditions.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe for our communities?

The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine has been given to people from other First Nations communities, including First Nations Elders and those with chronic health conditions around the world. There are no particular safety concerns for First Nations people including Elders and those with chronic health conditions.

REFERENCES

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) March 2021. Information about COVID-19 vaccines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe for people who are breastfeeding, pregnant or planning pregnancy?

If you are breastfeeding or planning pregnancy you can have the Pfizer vaccine.

If you are pregnant, it's not usually recommended to be vaccinated against COVID-19 because pregnant women weren't included in COVID-19 vaccine testing. You may still choose to be vaccinated, especially if you are at risk of becoming very sick from COVID-19. It's important to yarn to your Aboriginal Health Worker, nurse or GP about your situation to find out what is best for you.

What are the side effects from COVID-19 vaccines?

All vaccines can have side effects. You may feel sore where the injection went in, feel tired, have a headache, sore muscles or a fever. The side effects can start on the day of your vaccination or the day after and should go away after 2–3 days.

Will COVID-19 vaccination stop me from getting COVID-19?

The vaccines don't completely stop people from getting COVID-19 but they do stop people getting very sick from it. To help protect our mob further we also need to make sure we wash our hands, cover our coughs and sneezes and cut down or quit smoking.

Where can I get more information?

If you have questions or worries about COVID-19 vaccines or want to get your vaccination, talk to your Aboriginal Health Worker, nurse or GP at your Aboriginal Medical Service or your local GP.

You can also visit www.health.gov.au for the latest updates on COVID-19 vaccines.

Islander People [pdf] accessed 23 April 2021

Department of Health Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about COVID-19 vaccines [online] accessed 23 April 2021