

FACT SHEET FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (AGED 12 AND ABOVE)

September 2021

COVID-19 vaccine rollout for young people (aged 12 and above) in care

The Department of Communities Tasmania is committed to making sure all children and young people living in out of home care are safe and well. The Department is supportive of all children and young people in care being fully vaccinated.

Immunisation protects children against harmful infections and is the safest and most effective way of preventing a range of diseases.

On 23 February 2021, the Tasmanian COVID-19 vaccine rollout began, with vaccines being delivered in phases. Those at greatest risk of exposure or likely to experience serious illness due to COVID-19 were to be vaccinated in Phase 1.

As of 13 September 2021, the Tasmanian Government expanded eligibility criteria for the COVID-19 vaccine to all people aged 12 and above.

The Secretary of the Department of Communities Tasmania has provided a generic consent for young

people aged 12 and above who are on a Care and Protection Order (with Guardianship), to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. This means when a young person (aged 12 and above) who is under a Care and Protection Order wants to receive the vaccination, they can do so either with the support of their carer, worker or doctor.

Sometimes a young person might be able to give consent themselves to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This means that the person giving you the vaccine might determine if you are an 'independent minor'. The person doing your immunisation will need to determine:

- that you fully understand the proposed treatment;
- you can discuss the vaccination (including intended and possible side effects and consequences if vaccination is not undertaken); and
- you provide your written consent prior to administering the vaccine.

What is coronavirus (COVID-19)?

In late 2019, a new disease similar to the flu was discovered, called coronavirus (COVID-19) which is caused by a newly discovered germ that belongs to the coronavirus family of viruses. Germs are tiny organisms that live in our environment and can make us sick if they get in our bodies. The germ that causes COVID-19 spreads easily from person to person and infects the breathing system, our nose, throat and lungs. It is passed from person to person through tiny droplets when people cough or sneeze.



COVID-19 can make you cough, feel tired, have a sore throat, have a fever (when your body gets very warm), and some people may find it hard to breathe. If someone thinks they have COVID-19, a doctor can do a test to check.

Do I have to get the vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine is voluntary, available to everyone and free.

Tasmanians have a great record in supporting immunisation programs. The aim is to make COVID-19 vaccine accessible to all eligible Tasmanians. It is possible that in the future, vaccination against COVID-19 might become a requirement for travel to certain destinations or for people working in certain high-risk workplaces. If this becomes the case, there will be exemptions in place for people who are unable to be vaccinated.

Side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine

Some people may experience minor side effects, similar to those experienced following a flu vaccine. Common side effects include pain, redness and swelling at the injection site as well as more general side-effects such as fever, chills, headache and tiredness.

Most symptoms are mild to moderate, occur within the first three days after vaccination, and disappear within 1–2 days of when they start.

Rare side effects from the Pfizer vaccine include:

- Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis), which usually occur within the first 15 minutes following vaccination and is why patients are asked to remain at the vaccination clinic for observation for at least 15 minutes following vaccination.
- Myocarditis and pericarditis (heart inflammation). Most reported cases have been mild and people have recovered quickly often without treatment.
- If side effects persist or worry you, then please seek medical attention.

How can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

A young person (aged 12 and above) can currently receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

It is important to remember that you must receive both doses of the vaccination to provide the best immunity.

When receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, you/your carer will be able to make that equally important follow up appointment for the second dose.

Your carer can book you in for a COVID-19 vaccine, please visit the following link for more information: <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/vaccination-information/covid-19-vaccination/Book-your-vaccine>

People you can talk to about the COVID-19 vaccine

If you want to get the COVID-19 vaccine, or if you're not sure, you can speak to your carer, doctor, or Child Safety Officer who can help you to book the vaccine or to find out more information and to hear why it is important.

It is important that you or your carer make contact with your Child Safety Officer if you do decide you want to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Your Child Safety Officer can then help you and your carer book an appointment and talk to you about the process.

For latest advice, information and resources

Coronavirus Information:

Go to: <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/>

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.