

# COVID-19

Vaccine update

08 October 2021



Department  
of Health

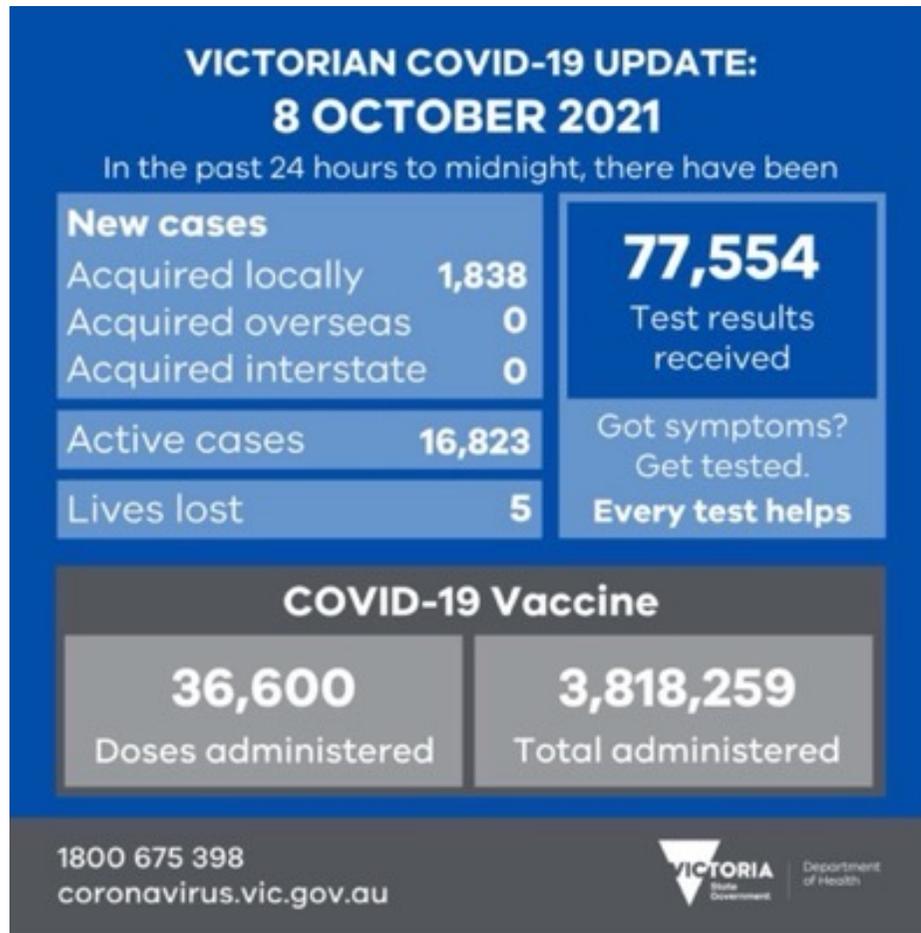
# Prof. Ben Cowie

Acting Chief Health Officer  
Department of Health Victoria

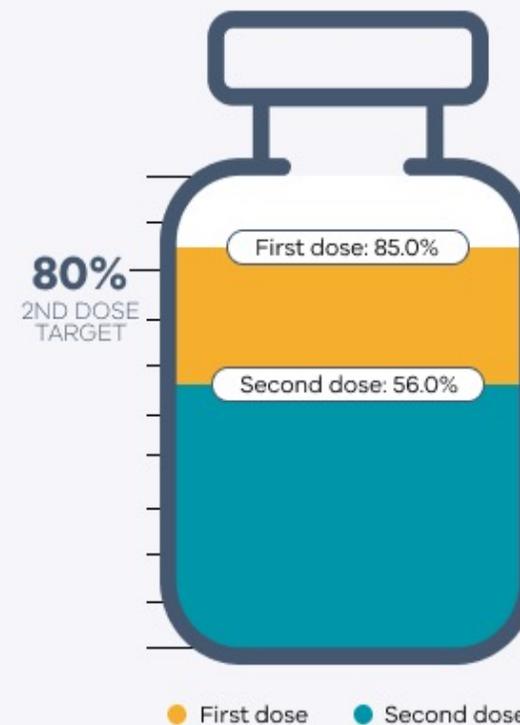


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# Current situation – Victoria



Our target is to vaccinate as many eligible Victorians as possible.



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# COVID-19

- 4.8 million reported deaths (underestimate)
- 236 million cases
- Very significant additional impacts
  - Health systems
  - Economies
  - Social, mental health impacts



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# Why Get Vaccinated?

## Protect yourself

- Lower risk of infection

- Less symptomatic infections

- Much less chance of needing to go to hospital

- Extremely good protection against needing ICU or loss of life

## Protect others

- Your friends and family

- The community

Getting back to COVID Normal – Victoria's Roadmap

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# What Happens If Nothing Gets Done?

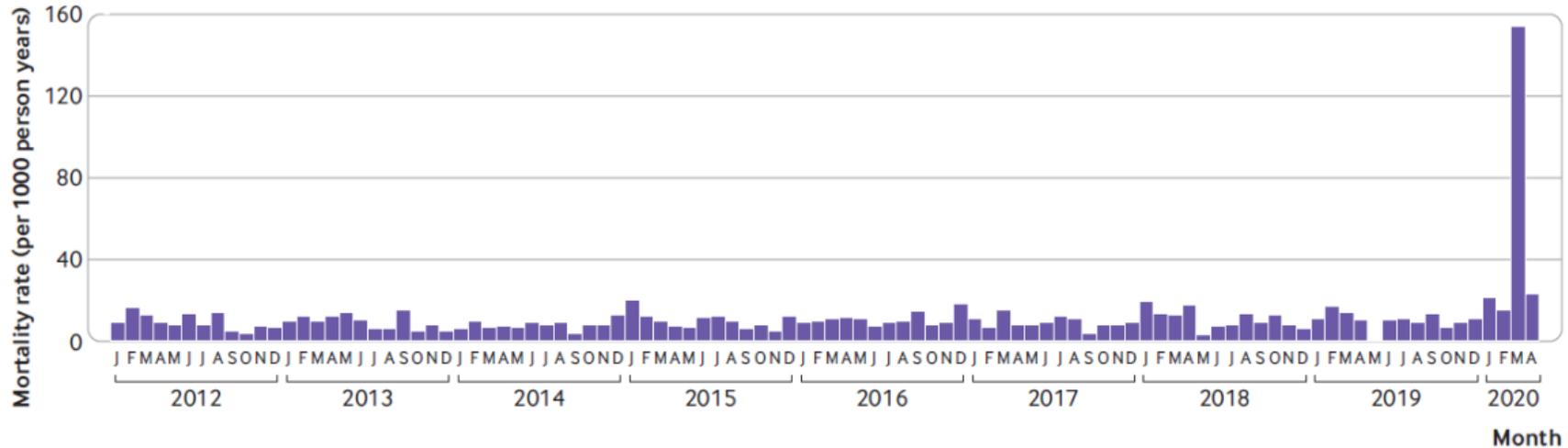
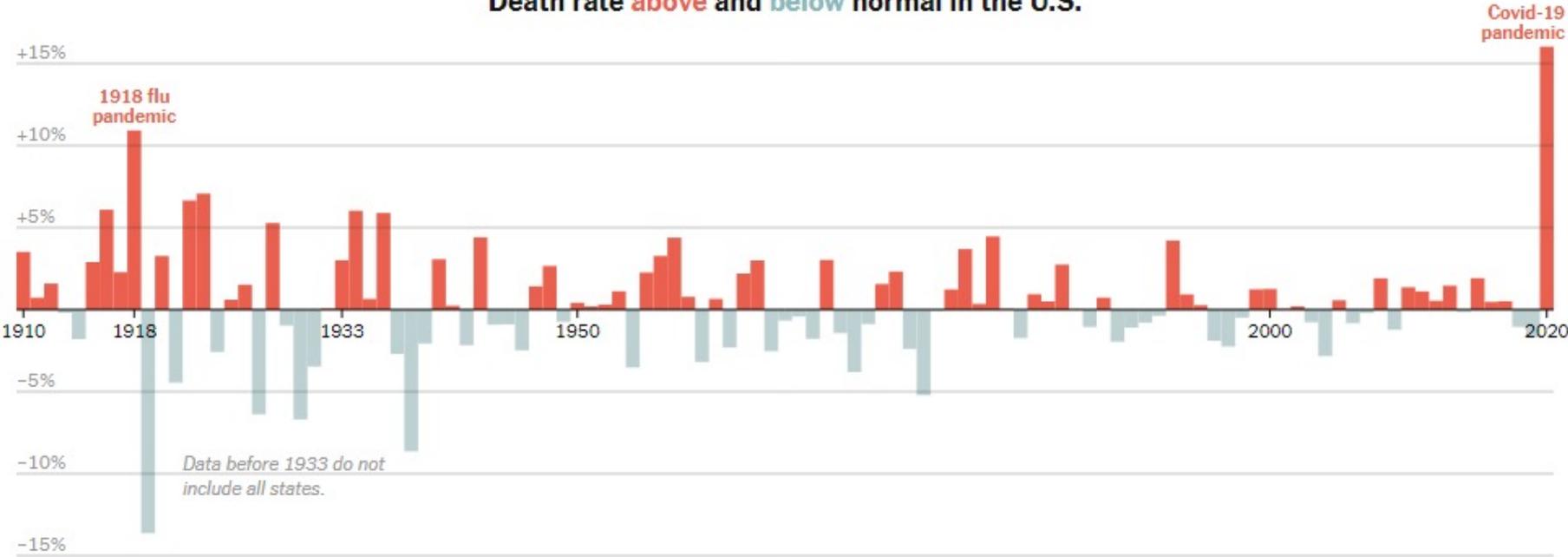


Fig 2 | Monthly all cause mortality per 1000 person years in Nembro between January 2012 and April 2020 (data only available to 11 April). Initials represent the months

Small town in Italy that had COVID-19 through the town before they even knew what it was in March 2020 Piccininni BMJ 2020

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### Death rate **above** and **below** normal in the U.S.



# COVID Safe Behaviours



Always carry a face mask and wear when required



Check-In using the Service Victoria QR code



Follow social distancing rules and be 1.5m apart



Wash your hands or hand sanitise regularly

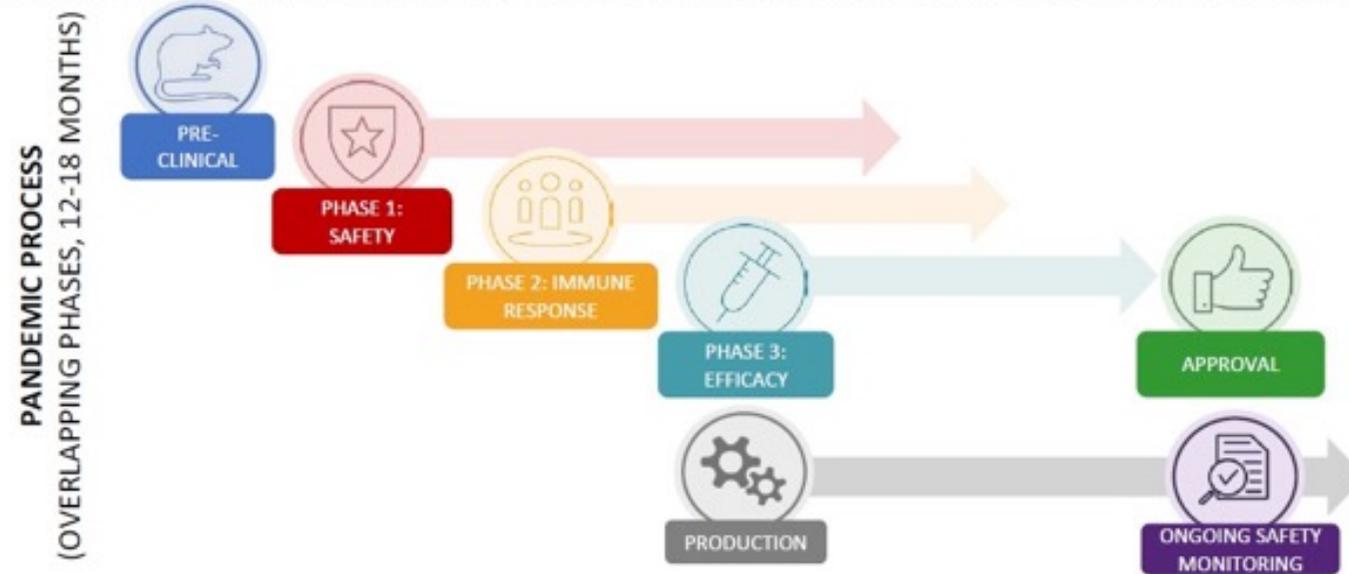


At the first sign of symptoms, get tested and stay home and isolate / quarantine



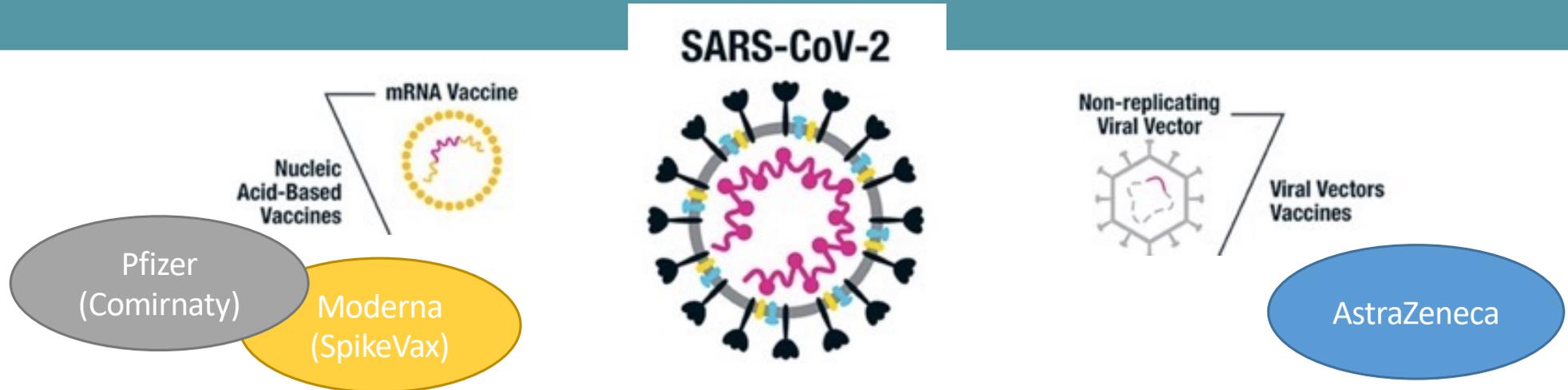
Get Vaccinated  
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# Vaccine development



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# SARS-CoV-2 Vaccines



Pfizer

**Trial data:**

88.9% against severe disease;  
**94.6% against symptomatic infection**  
**100% in children 12-15**

Moderna

95-100% against severe disease;  
**94.1% against symptomatic infection**  
**93% in children 12-17**

AstraZeneca

100% against severe disease; 66.7% against **symptomatic infection, 82.4% at 12+ wk gap**

**Effectiveness against Delta (2 doses):**

**>90% against hospitalisation**

**>90% against hospitalisation**

**>90% against hospitalisation**

**Transmission**

Reduced

Reduced

Reduced

• Image: Flanagan et al, Front Immunol (2020)

• Regular updates on vaccines: <https://medicine.unimelb.edu.au/school-structure/paediatrics/news-and-events/covid-19-weekly-vaccine-updates>

Adolescents:

• <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-recommendations-on-the-use-of-covid-19-vaccines-in-all-young-adolescents-in-australia>

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# Victorian Vaccine Recommendations

0-11 years	12-17 years	18-59 years	60+ years
No vaccine currently available, data on Pfizer and Moderna TBA	Pfizer Moderna	Pfizer Moderna <i>*AstraZeneca with informed consent</i>	Pfizer (GPs) Moderna (Pharmacies) AstraZeneca

- Current recommended spacing is:
  - Pfizer - 3 weeks (up to 6)
  - Moderna – 4 weeks (up to 6)
  - AstraZeneca – 6 weeks (range 4-12)
- Second dose AZ recommended for anyone who safely received the first dose
- Third/booster doses not currently recommended
- Mixing brands not currently recommended

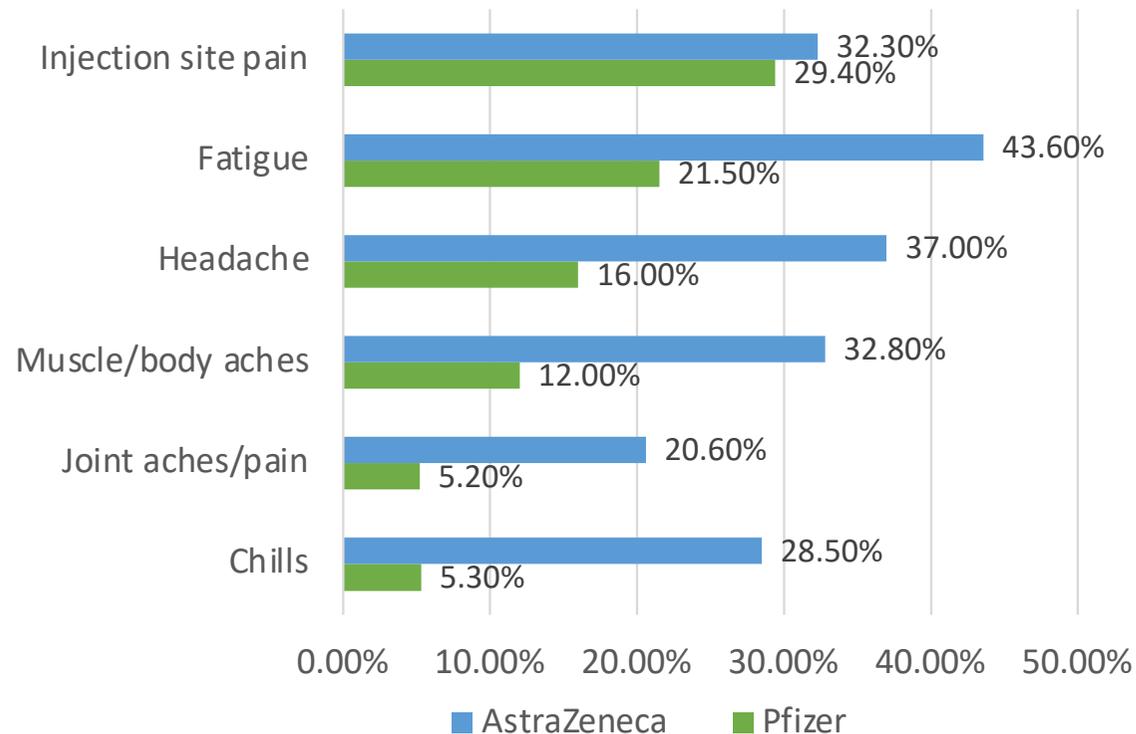
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- The Commonwealth has announced that mRNA covid vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) will be available to all people 12 years and over from 1 October.
- People aged 60 years and over can now be offered mRNA vaccines
- Currently only available through GP's and Pharmacies.
- The State system is working through the appropriate time to make the change in our system.

- ATAGI has stated that they currently believe that there is insufficient evidence to recommend booster doses yet.
- They have emphasised the importance of currently focussing on ensuring high dose 1 and 2 coverage
- They will provide further advice towards the end of October.
- Countries like the UK and the US have now recommended boosters in high risk populations at approximately 9 months after the 1st dose

[ATAGI statement about the need for additional doses of COVID-19 vaccines](#)

## Common and expected side effects – dose 1



AusVaxSafety COVID-19 vaccine safety surveillance as at 12 September 2021



**55.8%** of participants reported no adverse event



**44.2%** of participants reported any adverse event



**0.8%** of participants reported visiting a doctor or emergency department

Source: National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, 'COVID-19 Vaccines | Ausvaxsafety' (Ausvaxsafety.org.au, 2021) <<https://www.ausvaxsafety.org.au/safety-data/covid-19-vaccines>> accessed 17 September 2021.

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AstraZeneca has been associated with causing blood clots, this is a **very rare side effect** known as thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (**TTS**).

It is **different from general clotting disorders** such as deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE). TTS can occur at different parts of the body, including the brain and the abdomen. The low level of blood platelets can potentially cause bleeding.

The **symptoms** mostly start between **4 and 20 days** after vaccination and can include:

- a severe persistent headache with additional features:
  - does not improve with simple painkillers
  - may be worse when lying down
  - may be accompanied by nausea and vomiting
- neurological symptoms such as blurred vision, difficulty with speech, drowsiness or seizures
- shortness of breath
- chest pain
- swelling in your leg
- persistent abdominal (belly) pain
- tiny blood spots under the skin away from the site of injection.

People should **go to hospital** if they **experience symptoms**.

TTS can be **treated effectively**. Early **diagnosis** and **treatment** significantly **improves patient outcomes**.

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# AstraZeneca Vaccine Safety

## Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS)

- Rare: approximately **13 cases per 1 million adults vaccinated**
  - Of 11.6 million doses of AZ, 148 confirmed or probable cases (Sept 30)
  - 8 deaths, 11 currently in hospital, all others discharged
  - Clinical awareness of TTS is high, suspected cases rapidly treated
- Only risk factor is age – younger people at higher risk
- **No increased risk of TTS** for people on blood thinners or with history of typical blood clots, heart disease, stroke or low platelets
- Not linked to mRNA vaccines

• <https://www.science.org.au/curious/people-medicine/should-i-get-covid-19-vaccine-how-weigh-your-risks-and-benefits>

• <https://www.tga.gov.au/periodic/covid-19-vaccine-weekly-safety-report-23-09-2021>

• <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagithanz-statement-provides-further-guidance-for-the-astrazeneca-vaccine-and-narrows-contraindication>

## ATAGI update, 24 September 2021

Age bracket (years)	Estimated rate (per 100,000 AZ vaccinations)
<60	2.3
≥60	1.8

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# Information on myocarditis or pericarditis

There is a **very rare risk** of serious **side effects** that impact your heart – these conditions are called myocarditis or pericarditis and can occur after receiving a **Pfizer** or **Moderna COVID-19** vaccine.

**Myocarditis** is the inflammation of the heart muscle, and **pericarditis** is the inflammation of the thin sac that surrounds the heart.

Most people who have experienced these heart conditions following vaccination with Pfizer have required hospitalisation however they have **responded well to standard treatment**. Patients have recovered quickly with treatment.

After your Pfizer vaccine you need to **watch** for the following **symptoms** in the days (typically **1-5 days**) following your vaccine:

- chest pain, pressure or discomfort
- shortness of breath
- Fainting
- pain with breathing
- irregular heartbeat, skipped beats or 'fluttering'

If you experience these symptoms you should **immediately seek medical attention**. You need to tell the doctor you see that you have recently had a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

When **diagnosed early** there are **effective treatments** available and many **people recover** without long term impacts.

Rare – 115 cases (September 26)

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Planning pregnancy: **No evidence of increased risk of pregnancy complications** in women who become pregnant after vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines have no effect on fertility.

Breastfeeding: It is **safe to continue breastfeeding** before or after COVID-19 vaccination. No evidence of any side effects or any harm to the woman or her infant.

Currently pregnant: Royal Australian New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and ATAGI recommend that **pregnant women are routinely offered Pfizer vaccine at any stage of pregnancy**. There are no safety concerns for the woman or her baby and helps protect against the risk of COVID-19 infection to protect both the woman and her baby.

- **Vaccination** should be **offered** to all persons who have **previously had** SARS-CoV-2 (**COVID-19**) infection regardless of a person's history of symptomatic or asymptomatic infection.
- Vaccination of people with known current COVID-19 should be **deferred** until the person has **recovered completely** from the acute illness and they have been appropriately **cleared from** their **isolation**.
- Some immunity will occur from having had COVID-19, however the current recommendation is for vaccination at the first available opportunity after recovery from COVID-19 and **not more than 6 months after COVID-19 disease**.

## **When to delay vaccination after having COVID:**

1. People with multisystem inflammatory syndrome should delay vaccination until 3 months after symptoms have resolved.
2. People who have received monoclonal antibody therapies or convalescent plasma should delay vaccination until at least 90 days after these have been administered

COVID-19 vaccines are **Halal** (Australian Fatwa Council)

COVID-19 vaccination **supported** by a  
huge **range of faiths** and **religious leaders globally**

COVID-19 vaccines **do not contain** any **human or animal tissue or cells**  
derived from human or animal tissue

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# Medical Exemptions

Exemption type	Reason
Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• anaphylaxis following a previous dose of a COVID vaccine</li><li>• previous anaphylaxis to any component of a COVID vaccine</li></ul>
Temporary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• acute major medical conditions such as major surgery or hospital admission for a serious illness.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Previous COVID illness</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• serious adverse event from a previous COVID vaccine dose that can't be attributed to another cause</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assessed to be a risk to themselves or others during the vaccination process.</li></ul>

COVID vaccine medical exemptions can be obtained from general practitioners, paediatricians, clinical immunologists, infectious disease, general or public health physicians, gynaecologists or obstetricians.

If someone thinks they qualify for an exemption based on the above, it's often best to visit a GP first to discuss.

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# Medical Exemptions

Exemption type	Reason
<b>Temporary - vaccine specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>mRNA vaccines:</b> history of heart inflammation (myocarditis or pericarditis) attributed to a previous dose, or has had another illness causing heart inflammation in the past six months, or acute decompensated heart failure.</li><li>• <b>AstraZeneca:</b> history of specific very rare bleeding and clotting conditions including: capillary leak syndrome, cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, heparin-induced thrombocytopenia, idiopathic splanchnic thrombosis, or antiphospholipid syndrome (with thrombosis and/or miscarriage).</li></ul>

Temporary exemptions – for up to 6 months

Reviewed within six months to see whether the person has recovered and can now be safely vaccinated. Only given if another COVID vaccine isn't suitable or available.

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/09/atagi-expanded-guidance-on-temporary-medical-exemptions-for-covid-19-vaccines.pdf>

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Resources developed by the [Victorian Department of Health](#):

- [Translated resources](#)
- [Subscribe](#) to receive COVID-19 Vaccine Project Updates
- During the vaccine rollout it is critical we all continue to be [COVIDSafe](#). Find out [where to get tested](#).

Resources developed by the [Australian Government Department of Health](#):

- [Easy-read resources](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine information in your language](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine campaign resources](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination decision guide for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning pregnancy](#)
- [ATAGI statement on revised recommendations on the use of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca](#) (17 June 2021)
- [ATAGI statement regarding vaccination of adolescents aged 12–15 years](#) (2 August 2021)
- [COVID-19 vaccination – Guidance on Myocarditis and Pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 vaccines](#) (30 July 2021)
- [Multilingual consumer factsheet about AstraZeneca vaccine](#) / [Multilingual consumer factsheet about Pfizer vaccine](#) / [Information on COVID-19 Spikevax \(Moderna\) vaccine](#)

Accurate and evidence-based answers to common questions

- <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/is-it-true>
- <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publication/covid-19-vaccines-common-questions-other-languages>

Other resources:

- National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance - [COVID-19 vaccines: Frequently asked questions](#)
- Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) - [COVID-19 vaccine: Information for consumers and health professionals](#)
- Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy - [www.allergy.org.au/patients/ascia-covid-19-vaccination-faq](http://www.allergy.org.au/patients/ascia-covid-19-vaccination-faq)
- Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre - [mvec.mcri.edu.au/references/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions/](http://mvec.mcri.edu.au/references/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions/)
- [Services Australia - How to get an Individual Health Identifier](#)

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# Take away messages about vaccine safety

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**Nearly 5 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines already given**

**Vaccine safety is constantly being monitored**

**Safety issues are rare**

**Talk to your GP or trusted health professional if you have personal questions**

**Information about pandemic conditions may continue to change**

**Media headlines may be misleading**

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# Siobhan Brophy

Engagement and Partnerships

COVID-19 Vaccination Program Department of Health



Department  
of Health

## Messages to share with the community

Getting vaccinated helps **protect you from getting sick** from COVID-19.

The vaccines being used in Australia are very effective at preventing serious illness and loss of life from COVID-19. Vaccination centres are open to people who are **eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.**

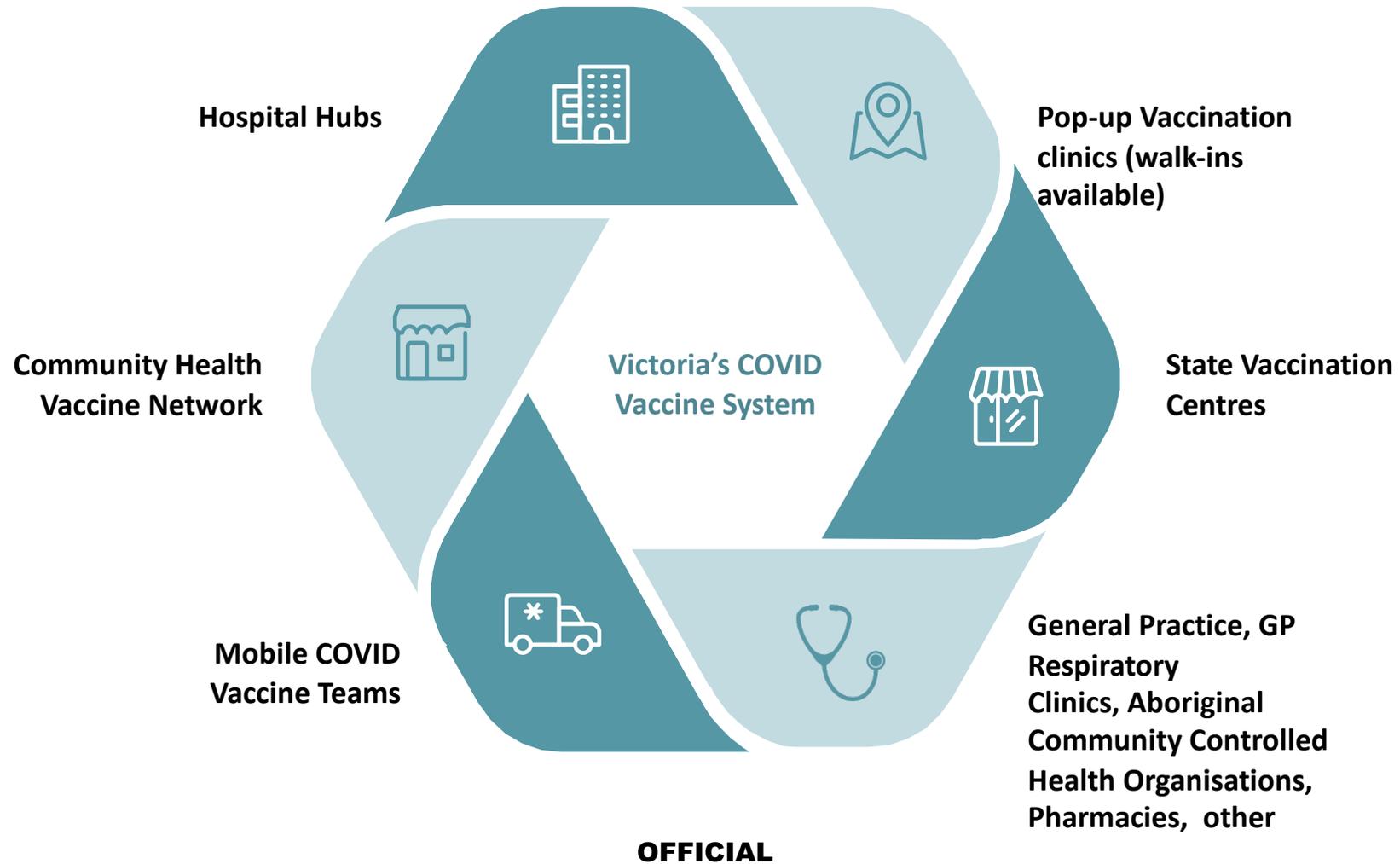
COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing are **free for everyone.**

You do not need insurance, or a visa, or Medicare card to get it.

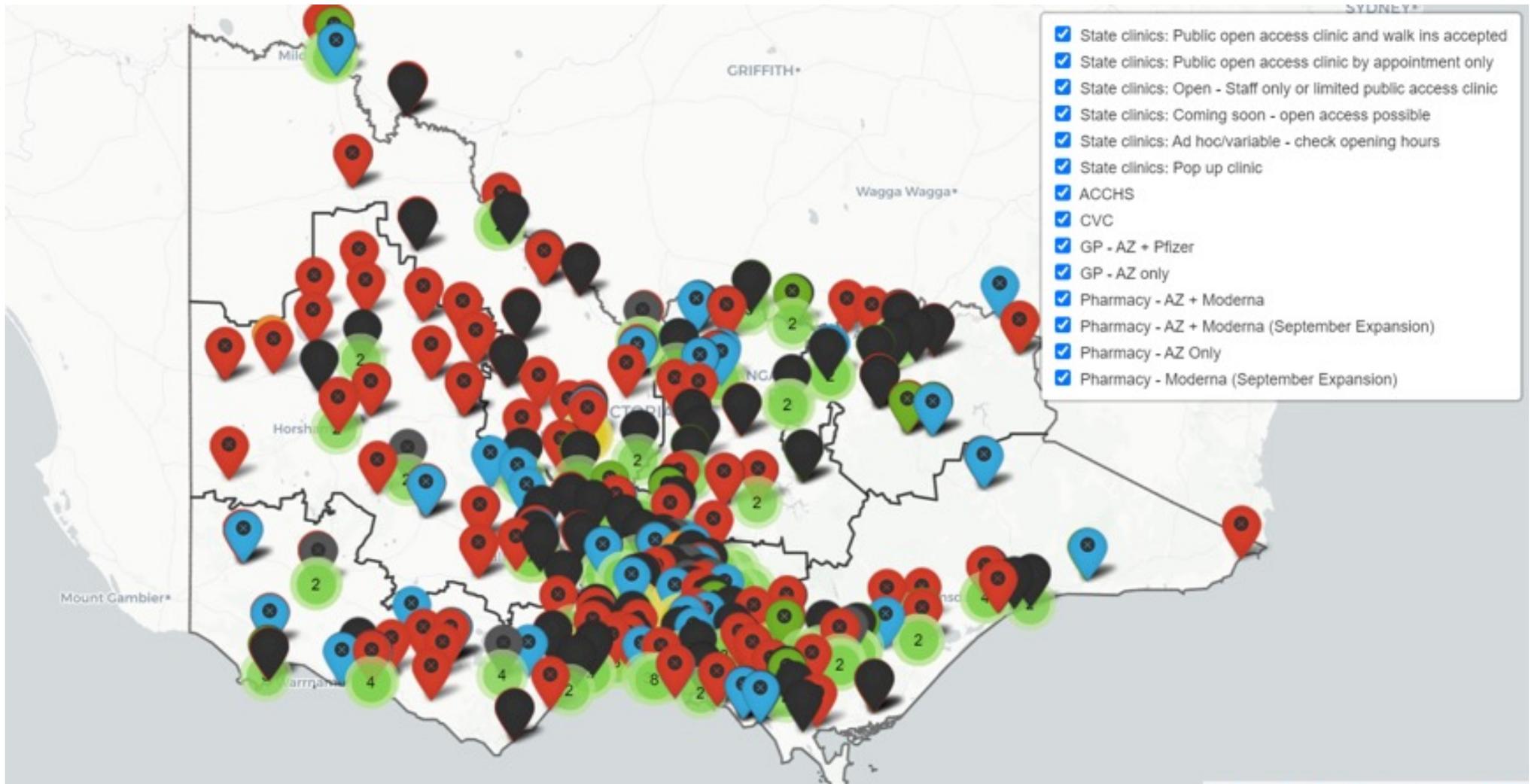


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# Where can I get a vaccine?



# COVID-19 Vaccination network



# How to book a COVID vaccination appointment?

## **To book an appointment at a state vaccination clinic**

Call 1800 675 398

Press 0 if you need an interpreter

Or visit <https://portal.cvms.vic.gov.au/>

## **To make an appointment at doctors and pharmacies**

Use the COVID-19 [vaccine clinic finder](#)

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# Thank you

[www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine)

[COVIDvaccination@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:COVIDvaccination@health.vic.gov.au)



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