

# COVID-19 vaccination information for family and friend carers

Last updated 26 July 2021

*Please note: This information is likely to change. Please regularly monitor <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/health-and-wellbeing/covid-19-vaccination-nsw/getting-vaccinated> for official updates.*

NSW Health is working closely with the Australian Government to plan and implement a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccination program in New South Wales (NSW). This fact sheet provides information specific to people caring for a family member or friend.

## Who is eligible for the vaccine?

The [Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) outlines that COVID-19 vaccines will be free for all Australian citizens, permanent residents and temporary visa-holders.

The Australian Government aims to have as many people vaccinated as possible in 2021. Identified groups continue to be prioritised based on advice from the [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\)](#).

[NSW Health](#) provide detailed information about when and how you can access the vaccine. Carers can also speak with their GP or another health professional for more information.

## Will carers be prioritised?

Many carers fall into priority groups for receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, including carers aged 40 years and above, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, carers of NDIS participants, and carers of people with an underlying medical condition or significant disability. More information about who is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine can be found on [the Department of Health website](#).

Due to the increasing risk of COVID-19 in Greater Sydney and limited supplies of the Pfizer vaccine, The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [released a Statement](#) on 24 July 2021 stating that all individuals aged 18 years and above in Greater Sydney should strongly consider getting vaccinated with any available vaccine, including AstraZeneca. Details about eligibility and risk can be found within the [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker tool](#).

## How do I access the vaccine?

The Australian Government Department of Health [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker](#) is an online tool available in a range of languages that you can use to confirm your eligibility and book an appointment. Carers who need assistance completing the tool can phone Carer Gateway for assistance on **1800 422 737**.

Carers may be asked to provide documentation to confirm that they have a caring role in order to receive the vaccine. Because there is no formal carer card in NSW, carers can fill in the [Eligibility Declaration Form](#) online and provide that to the GP or clinic where they are being vaccinated. Carers do not need to be in receipt of the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance to receive the vaccine.

## How do I know that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe?

Australia has strict testing and approval processes for vaccinations to ensure they are safe. Vaccinations require approval from the [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) (TGA) before they can be administered. This [video](#) describes the TGA's process of how they assess and approve vaccines.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has developed [resources](#), including [consent forms](#), to help with providing informed consent to get a COVID-19 vaccination.

## What if the person I care for is frightened about getting the vaccine?

Carers are advised to support the person they care for to talk through the process with their GP or another health expert. Some tips to manage anxiety include:

- Avoid reading or watching stories about vaccines
- Deep breathing exercises can alleviate pain and anxiety
- Distraction techniques can be used to divert attention away from the needle
- Having a familiar person present can provide a person with reassurance

## Where can I find more information?

Carers are encouraged to access official sources for information to help them make an informed choice and stay up to date. Information will be communicated on the [Australian Department of Health website](#) and the [NSW Government website](#).

COVID-19 vaccine information is available in a [variety of languages](#). Visit the [Department of Health website](#) for more information. Information about COVID-19 vaccines for [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#) is also available.

If you have questions or concerns about the vaccine, you can:

- Speak with your local GP or health professional to discuss any questions or concerns
- The [National coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine](#) helpline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **1800 020 080**
- If you or the person you care for receives support through the [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#), speak with your provider, or call the NDIA on **1800 800 110**. You can also contact the Disability Gateway on **1800 643 787** if you do not receive support through the NDIS.
- If you are an older person, or care for someone who is ageing, contact the [Older Persons Advocacy Network COVID-19 line](#) on **1800 237 981**

## Can I leave home to get vaccinated?

Leaving home to get a COVID-19 vaccination is allowed during a stay at home order. However, people who have been told by NSW Health that they are a '[close contact](#)' of a confirmed case must reschedule their appointment, and people who are a '[casual contact](#)' of a confirmed case must only attend their appointment if they have been tested and received a negative test result.

You can find out if you are a close or casual contact by regularly reviewing the current case locations at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates>.