

After your COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccination

About the vaccine

Today you have received **COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca**.

This vaccine can prevent people from becoming ill from COVID-19. COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca does not contain any live SARS-CoV-2 virus (the virus that causes COVID-19), and it cannot give you COVID-19. It contains the genetic code for an important part of the SARS-CoV-2 virus called the spike protein that is carried into your cells by a harmless common cold 'carrier' virus (an adenovirus). Your body then makes the spike protein and uses it to learn to recognise and fight against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The adenovirus has been modified so that it cannot replicate once it is inside cells. This means it cannot spread to other cells and cause infection.

What to expect after vaccination

As with any vaccine, you may have some side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

Common side effects after **COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca** include:

- pain, swelling, tenderness, redness or itching at the injection site
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- nausea
- fever and chills
- feeling unwell
- joint pain.

Less common side effects after **COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca** include:

- enlarged lymph nodes
- pain in limb
- dizziness
- decreased appetite
- stomach pain.

These side effects are usually mild. They occur in around two-thirds of people who are vaccinated, start within a day after the vaccination and go away within one or two days

Some people will have more significant flu-like symptoms from this vaccination compared to other vaccines and may require time away from normal activities. These symptoms are more common after the first dose compared with the second dose.

If you have pain at the injection site, fever, headaches or body aches in the first 1–2 days after vaccination, you can take paracetamol. This helps to reduce some of the above symptoms. You do not need to take paracetamol or ibuprofen before vaccination. If there is swelling at the injection site, you can use a cold compress.

Rare side effects that have been reported after **COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca** are:

- Severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis):
 - Anaphylaxis after COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca is very rare. The rate in Australia appears similar to any other vaccine.
- A condition called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS), which involves blood clotting (thrombosis) and low platelet levels (thrombocytopenia):
 - Information from Australia and overseas shows that TTS is a rare condition
 - The blood clots can occur at different parts of the body, including the brain (this is called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis) and the abdomen (this is called idiopathic splenic vein thrombosis). The low level of blood platelets can cause bleeding.
 - The symptoms of this condition occur around 4 to 30 days after vaccination.

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- People with this condition are very unwell and need to go to hospital. This condition can lead to long-term disability, and even death.

You should seek medical attention after vaccination if:

- You think you are having an allergic reaction. Call 000 if you experience severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, wheezing, a fast heartbeat or collapsing.
- You have an expected side effect of the vaccine that has not gone away after a few days
- You have any of the following symptoms, particularly around 4 to 30 days after vaccination:
 - severe, persistent headaches that are different to your "usual" headaches and do not settle with paracetamol or other painkillers
 - blurred vision
 - weakness of face or limbs
 - confusion or seizure.
 - shortness of breath
 - chest pain
 - persistent abdominal pain
 - leg swelling
 - pin-prick rash or bruising not at the injection site that cannot be explained.

Be sure to tell your doctor that you have recently received the vaccine. For symptoms which are not urgent, you can see your regular healthcare provider (usually your GP).

Vaccine safety monitoring and reporting side effects

You can report suspected side effects to your vaccination provider or other healthcare professional. They will then make a formal report on your behalf to your state or territory health department or directly to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

If you would prefer to report yourself, please visit the TGA website and follow the directions on the page: <https://www.tga.gov.au/reporting-suspected-side-effects-associated-covid-19-vaccine>.

COVID-19 testing after vaccination

Some side effects from COVID-19 vaccination might be similar to symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever). However, COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca does not contain any live SARS-CoV-2 virus and cannot cause COVID-19. You may not need to get a COVID-19 test or isolate:

- if you develop general symptoms like fever, headache or tiredness in the first two days after vaccination, and
- if you are sure that you don't have any respiratory symptoms (e.g. runny nose, cough, sore throat, loss of smell or loss of taste).

However, you should check the current guidelines in your state/territory for the most up-to-date information. This advice may change in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in your local area. You may still need to get a COVID-19 test if you meet other criteria, for example if you are in close contact of a known COVID-19 case. If in doubt, seek medical assessment.

Remember your second appointment

It is important that you receive two doses of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, about 12 weeks apart. The second dose will provide you with better protection against COVID-19.