



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**



COVID-19 Vaccines

Mythbusters and frequently asked questions

Myths

Aboriginal people are being told to get the vaccine before everyone else

Australia's COVID-19 vaccines will become available in phases.

Priority groups have been identified for the first phases, including people that would be at a higher risk of serious illness if they contracted COVID-19, and those most likely to be exposed to it.

Phase 1a started in February and is well underway for our quarantine and border workers, frontline health care workers and aged care and disability care staff and residents.

Phase 1b is expected to start in March and not only includes Aboriginal people who are aged 55 and older, it also includes those who are at a higher risk of serious illness if they contract COVID-19. This includes older adults, health care workers, those with existing medical conditions, and critical and high-risk.

All people who live in remote communities will have the opportunity to receive the vaccine at the same time, regardless of which phase they may be in.

The COVID-19 vaccine is killing Aboriginal people or making them sick

The COVID-19 vaccine has not caused increased death rates in other communities where it has been widely used and there is no evidence that Aboriginal people react worse to the vaccine than others.

Some people may experience mild side effects after getting vaccination such as tiredness, muscle soreness and redness around the injection site and mild fever. This is normal for any vaccine.

Serious reactions from the vaccine are extremely rare and may occur within 15 minutes therefore you must stay with the nurse for 15 minutes (or longer if needed) after receiving the vaccine.

Aboriginal people are being used as guinea pigs for the vaccine

Aboriginal people are not the first people to receive the COVID-19 vaccines. Tens of millions of people across the world have already received the vaccine safely.

COVID-19 vaccination is voluntary. The COVID-19 vaccination is recommended to protect yourself, Elders and community.



The vaccine implants a microchip in me that will track our movements

The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain a tracking microchip and there is no evidence or data to support this. Microchips are too large to be administered through needle injection.

This conspiracy theory/rumour has been circulated across social media platforms, to create a fear of technology and a mistrust of Governments.

Rumours like these can cause mass scepticism of vaccines. It is best to receive your information from trusted sources including [health.wa.gov.au](https://www.health.wa.gov.au).

Frequently asked questions

The vaccines have been made so quickly, how can we be sure they are safe?

Safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines have been able to be developed faster than any other vaccine because of several reasons:

- A level of funding and commitment not seen before;
- The availability of new technologies; and
- Researchers and developer around the world working together.

Some steps of the clinical trials and approval processes have been done at the same time instead of one after the other. As soon as the preliminary data was available, the trials were able to progress. This has given us access to the vaccine as quickly as possible.

Only old people get or die from COVID so why should I get the vaccine?

Anyone can get COVID-19. The elderly and people with chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes are most at risk of serious COVID-19 infections.

Luckily, thanks to the hard work in our communities, numbers have been very low for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with no deaths. However, there have still been approximately 150 cases so far and a vaccine is a safe and effective way to protect people against serious illness from COVID-19.

Just like the flu, it is important to get vaccinated to protect yourself, family, our vulnerable and our community.

Even if you are not an older person, you should still get vaccinated against COVID-19. The vaccine will strengthen your immune system by training it to recognise and fight the COVID-19 virus before it makes you very sick and pass it onto others.

Is there a difference to the vaccine that is being rolled out in our community to the ones that are rolled out across Australia and internationally?

Everyone in Australia will have access to more than one vaccine. Every vaccine that is available in Australia must firstly be approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and must meet strict standards for safety, quality and efficacy.

At this stage, there will be no difference in which vaccine is given in a remote Aboriginal community and the wider Australian community.



Can I choose which vaccine I get?

No. You cannot choose which vaccine you get. It will depend on vaccine availability and any determination made by the TGA. Those who are at greatest risk will be vaccinated first.

All registered and approved vaccines are effective in protecting against COVID-19 and serious illness caused by the virus.

Where can Aboriginal people get the vaccine?

The Australian government is working closely with States and Territory Governments and National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (NACCHO) to ensure the vaccine is made available to all Aboriginal people.

There will be many sites across Australia where the vaccine will be made available. Many of them will be in rural and remote locations. This includes Western Australian state-run clinics, country hospitals, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACHHS), GP-led Respiratory clinics, GP clinics and community pharmacies.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, eligibility criteria and more FAQ's please visit [HealthyWA.wa.gov.au](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au)

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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