

COVID-19 Vaccination Information for People with Weakened Immune Systems

Last updated - 24 June 2021

When should I be vaccinated?

If you have a weakened immune system because you have a medical condition or have treatment that affects immunity, you should consider getting vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible.

Is my risk of severe COVID-19 illness higher because of my weakened immunity?

Yes, most likely. The risk of infection from COVID-19 is even higher for you than for people with normal immunity. This is because your condition or past condition may make you more susceptible to severe illness and complications from COVID-19.

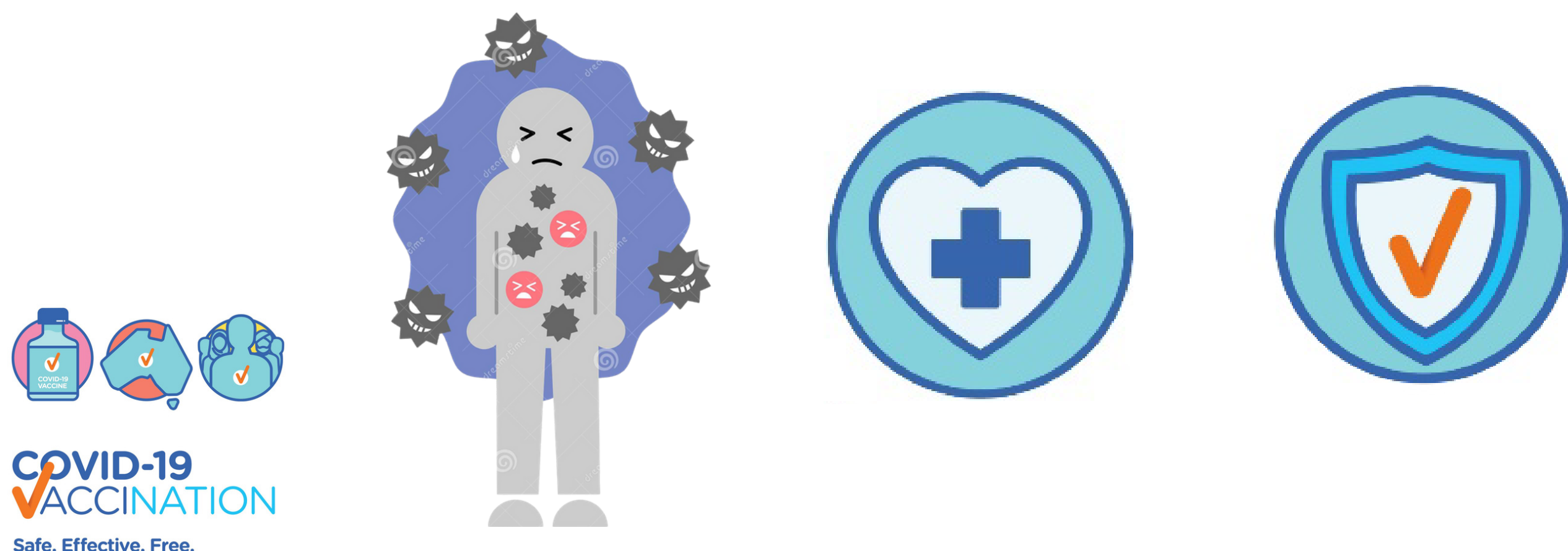
Are the vaccines safe for me?

Both vaccines currently available in Australia are suitable for people with compromised immune systems. Neither vaccine can cause COVID-19 and they are approved by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) which has very rigorous testing and high standards for safety. If you are unsure about the vaccines or anything to do with vaccination, you should talk to your doctor or medical specialist.

How do I know if I have a weakened immune system?

You may be immunocompromised if you have or have ever had:

- cancer, especially blood cancer
- cancer treatments (chemotherapy, radiotherapy, CAR-T cell therapy)
- a bone marrow transplant, stem cell or organ transplant (e.g. heart, liver, kidney, lung)
- immune deficiencies
- HIV infection
- prescribed medicines that weaken your immune system deliberately



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Can I get vaccinated now?

Yes. You can make your vaccination appointments now. See 'How To Book' fact sheet.

What do I need to consider before vaccination, or discuss with my doctor?

If you are having:

- chemotherapy
- any treatment that requires infusion (via a drip)
- an immune checkpoint inhibitor
- a new immune-weakening treatment soon, or
- any reservations about vaccination

you should **TALK TO A DOCTOR** before being vaccinated to properly understand your personal medical situation.

Do I need to think about the timing of my vaccination with my other treatments?

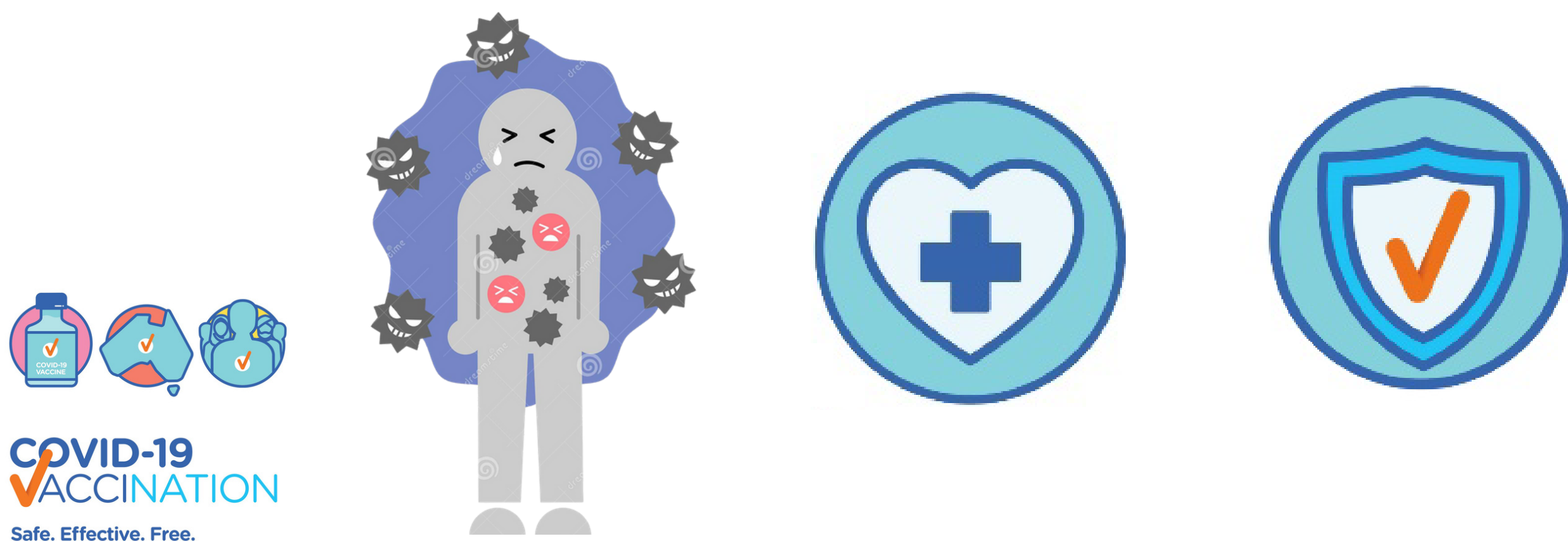
You may need to wait to be vaccinated to allow your treatment to settle down, or you may need to be vaccinated and then wait two weeks before your treatment can commence. Your treating doctor or specialist is the best person to advise you.

Where can I find more information?

You can find out more online at these links:

- StarHealth website: www.tinyurl.com/3v9sw9ey or www.starhealth.org.au
- Government website: <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines>

or by talking to your Doctor or treating specialist.



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