



## After your Pfizer (Comirnaty) COVID-19 vaccination

### About the vaccine

Today your child has received the **Comirnaty (Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd) vaccine**.

This vaccine can prevent people from becoming ill from COVID-19. Comirnaty does not contain any live virus, 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. After getting the vaccine, your body makes copies of the spike protein. The immune system will then learn to recognise and fight against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The genetic code is broken down quickly by the body.

We are still learning about the immunity the vaccine provides in children and young people with cancer and blood disorders. This means that maintaining prevention strategies including physical distancing, hand washing, face masks and avoiding people who are sick are still important.

### What to expect after vaccination

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

**Common** side effects after **Comirnaty** include:

- pain or swelling at the injection site
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- fever and chills – see information on fever in people with cancer below
- joint pain

**Less common** side effects after **Comirnaty** include:

- redness at the injection site
- nausea
- enlarged lymph nodes
- feeling unwell
- pain in limb
- insomnia
- itching at the injection site.

These side effects are usually mild and usually go away within one or two days. Some recipients will experience more significant flu-like symptoms from this vaccination compared to other common vaccinations and may require time away from normal activities. These symptoms may occur after either dose but are more common after the second dose. If there is swelling at the injection site, you can use a cold compress. We don't know if these side effects are more or less common in people with cancer or blood disorders. It is important to follow the usual advice regarding your child's treatment.

### **What to do if your child has a fever after the COVID-19 vaccine.**

You should follow the usual management of fever that is in place for your child.

#### **IF YOUR CHILD IS ON TREATMENT OR LESS THAN 6 MONTHS OFF TREATMENT OR ON ACTIVE GVHD TREATMENT OR HAS CENTRAL LINE IN PLACE**

If your child experiences a fever post vaccination you must follow the standard advice for a fever and go to the emergency department. In the absence of fever do not give paracetamol or ibuprofen if they have pain at the injection site, headache or body aches after vaccination. Do not give paracetamol or ibuprofen before vaccination.

#### **IF YOUR CHILD IS GREATER THAN 6 MONTHS OFF TREATMENT AND DOES NOT HAVE A CENTRAL LINE**

If your child experiences pain at the injection site or fever, headaches or body aches after vaccination, you can give a dose of paracetamol, only give ibuprofen if your medical specialist has previously said it was ok to do so. This may help to reduce some of the above symptoms. Go to the emergency department or seek medical review if you are worried about your child. Do not give paracetamol or ibuprofen before vaccination.

### **Rare side effects that have been reported after Comirnaty are:**

- severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)
- myocarditis and pericarditis. Most reported cases have been mild, self-limiting and recovered quickly, although longer-term follow-up of these cases is ongoing. Cases have been reported predominantly after the second dose and predominantly in younger males (aged < 30 years)

### **You should seek medical attention after vaccination if:**

- you think your child is having an allergic reaction. Call 000 if they experience severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, wheezing, a fast heartbeat or collapsing
- your child has chest pain, pressure or discomfort, irregular heartbeat, skipped beats or 'fluttering', fainting, shortness of breath or pain with breathing
- you are worried about a potential side effect or your child has new or unexpected symptoms
- your child has an expected side effect of the vaccine which has not gone away after a few days.
- 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 it yourself, please visit the reporting suspected side effects associated with a COVID-19 vaccine webpage on the TGA website and follow the directions on the page.

## **Will COVID-19 vaccine be effective for my child?**

People with cancer and blood disorders can have reduced responses to vaccines, meaning they may not be as well protected as people whose immune system is normal. After your child has received their vaccination continue to follow other protective measures against COVID-19 including:

- physical distancing
- hand washing
- wearing a face mask, and
- COVID-19 testing and self-isolation or quarantine according to instructions of your local public health authority.

The effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in people with cancer and blood disorders is not yet known because detailed studies have not yet been conducted on this group. These studies will be available in the coming months and years. However, as there are a lot of risks associated with COVID-19, people should get vaccinated as soon as possible.

## **COVID-19 testing after vaccination**

Some side effects from COVID-19 vaccination might be similar to symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever). However, Comirnaty does not contain any live virus and cannot cause COVID-19.

Your child may need a COVID-19 test:

- if they develop a fever
- if they have an appointment at the hospital

Your child may not need to get a COVID-19 test or isolate:

- if they develop general symptoms like headache or tiredness in the first two days after vaccination, and
- if you are sure that they 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. Your child may still need to get a COVID-19 test if you meet other criteria, for example if they are a close contact of a known COVID-19 case. If in doubt, seek medical assessment.

## **Remember your second appointment**

It is important that your child receive two doses of Comirnaty (Pfizer), at least three weeks apart. The second dose is likely to prolong the duration of protection against COVID-19.

## **How is the information you provide at your appointment used**

For information on how your personal details are collected, stored and used visit

<https://www.health.gov.au/using-our-websites/privacy/privacy-notice-for-covid-19-vaccinations>