

# A MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS FROM

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Chief Public Health Officer



## Dear parents and carers,

I am very pleased that all children aged 5 to 11 years can now be vaccinated against COVID-19 in South Australia.

COVID-19 in young children is generally mild, however some children can become more severely ill. Symptoms include runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever, feeling tired, sometimes diarrhoea or vomiting and loss of taste or smell.

Children with other health problems are at greater risk of getting severely ill with COVID-19. These health problems include congenital heart disease, chronic lung problems, being above a healthy weight, and neurological (brain, nerve and muscle) disorders including epilepsy. Children with conditions that impact the immune system (treatments for cancer, treatments for some forms of arthritis and other autoimmune disorders, and congenital problems with immune functioning for example) would also be expected to be more vulnerable.

Vaccination reduces the chances of children becoming infected and reduces the number and severity of symptoms if children do get infected. Children may also be less likely to pass on the infection if they are vaccinated.

While COVID-19 can be mild in children, the more children infected with COVID, the greater the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Even though schools across South Australia have made an enormous effort reduce the spread of COVID-19, we are expecting more cases in children as schools return because of the significant Omicron outbreak in our state at this time.

You can protect your child, your family and the community by having your child vaccinated against COVID-19 along with all other family members over the age of 5 years.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends children aged 5 to 11 years receive 2 doses of the paediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. This is a smaller dose (about a third of the dose) to that given to adults and children older than 12 years.

If you haven't already done so, please book your child's first and second appointments at the following website: [sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidvaccine](https://sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidvaccine).

SA Health has lots of information to help answer questions, including fact sheets, videos, a children's book and a range of other resources. For more information, visit [sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidvaccinechildren](https://sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidvaccinechildren).

Please join me in being a fully vaccinated family.

Best wishes and stay safe

**PROFESSOR NICOLA SPURRIER**  
Chief Public Health Officer  
Health Regulation and Protection

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