

How to speak to kids about COVID-19 vaccines

Last updated: 0 D U F K 202

The safety of the Australian population has always been the Australian Government's highest priority. For this reason, decisions regarding COVID-19 vaccines have been, and continue to be, based on the expert medical advice of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

ATAGI recommends COVID-19 vaccination in everyone from 5 years of age.

It's natural for your child to be curious and to have lots of questions about COVID-19 vaccinations. Here are some tips for speaking to children before and after they receive a vaccine.

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It's important that your child receives the vaccine.

Engage and listen to your child's response

Engage with your child and invite them to share what they

have heard about COVID-19 vaccines. It's important to listen to their responses and acknowledge any fears they have about being vaccinated.

For example:

• Tell me what you know so far about COVID-19 vaccines. I've heard that they're safe and effective. I want to know more about them.

Remember children take emotional cues from adults, so oversharing fears may not be constructive and may make your child feel uncomfortable.

It may help to explain to your child what they can expect on the day of the appointment.

Explain that the doctor or medical professional will ask your child some questions, that your child will receive a needle in their arm, that they'll feel a small prick and their arm might be a little bit sore afterwards. Reassure your child by telling them it's normal for their arm to be a little bit sore, and it means the medicine is working.

If your child seems anxious about getting vaccinated, try exploring their feelings further or seek

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You can call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on 1800 020 080.

If you need information in a language other than English, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can call the National Relay Service on 133 677.