

Parents of children with chronic lung conditions concerned with safety and side effects of COVID-19 vaccine

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With the emergence of different SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern including the more transmissible Delta variant, children are more likely

to become infected with COVID-19 than with previous variants. Although in most countries children are yet not vaccinated against COVID-19, many high-income countries including Australia have started vaccinating children aged 12 years and above. It is likely that by end of 2021 or early 2022, children as young as five years of age may be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccinating [children](#) against COVID-19 will help protect against severe disease as well as help reduce community transmission. Children with chronic lung conditions are a priority group for vaccination against other respiratory infections including influenza and pneumococcal disease, as respiratory infections can be severe in these children and lead to exacerbation of underlying lung conditions.

A survey recently conducted by researchers from the Discipline of Pediatrics at UNSW Medicine & Health, of parents and carers with children that suffer from chronic lung conditions found that while there was consensus among them about the severity of COVID-19, more than 80 percent of the parents were willing to have their child vaccinated against COVID-19. However, safety and side effects of the [vaccine](#) were some of the major reasons reported for not wanting their child to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

More than 90 percent of the parents and carers said they would have their child vaccinated if recommended by the child's pediatrician. Additionally, 80 percent of parents and carers said they would vaccinate their child if recommended by their GP. The preferred locations for vaccination were the GP clinics or the hospital.

Pediatric respiratory epidemiologist Dr. Nusrat Homaira, the lead author of the study that was conducted at the Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick said, "We know [health care workers](#) play an important role in promoting vaccine uptake. Children with chronic lung conditions is a

unique group as they require ongoing follow-up visits with their GPs and pediatricians for their [chronic conditions](#). GPs and pediatricians can leverage scheduled follow-up visits to promote COVID-19 vaccines and explain the benefits and rare side effects of the vaccine."

More information: Nusrat Homaira et al, Parent/carers' opinions about COVID -19 vaccination for children with chronic lung diseases, *Health Science Reports* (2021). [DOI: 10.1002/hsr2.410](https://doi.org/10.1002/hsr2.410)

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