NCIRS National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance Australia

Information guide
September 2026

Why is COVID-19 vaccination important for older adults?

COVID-19 is a serious disease, especially in older adults.

COVID-19 continues to be a **leading contributor to respiratory infection-related deaths** in Australia. In 2025, it was responsible for over 2,000 deaths nationally.*

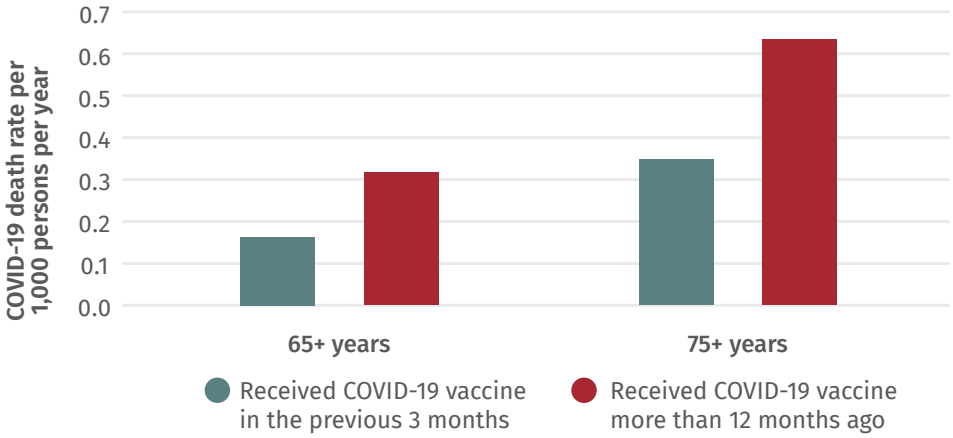
Older adults who have had a recent COVID-19 vaccine dose have almost **half the risk of dying from COVID-19** compared with those whose last COVID-19 vaccine was over a year ago.

75+

Adults aged 75 years and over will **benefit the most from a COVID-19 vaccine** because they have higher death rates from COVID-19.

It is safe to administer COVID-19 vaccines **at the same time** as other vaccines, including the influenza vaccine.

Death rates from COVID-19 in Australia based on time since COVID-19 vaccination and according to age



People who received a COVID-19 vaccine more than 12 months ago are almost twice as likely to die from COVID-19 compared with people who received a COVID-19 vaccine in the previous 3 months.

Source: Liu B, Stepien S, Macartney K. Changing COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 mortality in older adults in Australia, 2022-2025. *Communications Health* 2026;1:8. https://doi.org/10.1038/s44528-026-00005-6

COVID-19 vaccine recommendations

- All adults aged 75 years and over (2 funded doses per year, approximately 6 months apart).
- Adults aged 65–74 years (one funded dose per year).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50–74 years (one funded dose per year).
- Adults aged 18–64 years with severe immunocompromise (one funded dose per year).

Refer to Australian Immunisation Handbook for detailed recommendations.

* Australian Bureau of Statistics. Deaths due to acute respiratory infections in Australia. February 2026. Available from: https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/causes-death/deaths-due-acute-respiratory-infections-australia/latest-release

To access NCIRS' COVID-19 resources, scan the QR code or visit **ncirs.org.au/covid-19**

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