

FAQs – Special Olympics Australia Vaccination Policy

August 2022

Vaccines

Does it matter which vaccination I receive?

The vaccination must meet the high safety, efficacy, and quality standards required for use in Australia. A list of provisional registrations is available on the Australian Government, Department of Health Therapeutic Goods Administration website: <https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-vaccines>

‘Up-to-date’ status and boosters

How can I find out if my vaccination status is ‘up-to-date’ or if I need to get a booster shot?

To be considered up to date with COVID-19 vaccination, you must have had all the doses recommended for your age and health needs.

You can find more information about remaining up to date here:

<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-your-vaccination/stay-up-to-date>

Exemptions

Are there any temporary exemptions for receiving the COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes. Based on the public health advice, temporary exemptions do apply. If you can’t get any of the approved COVID-19 vaccines for medical reasons, this will be recorded on your immunisation history statement and COVID-19 digital certificate. This is called a medical contraindication. This means you can’t have any of the COVID-19 vaccines. Your doctor will need to update your record on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) to say you have a medical contraindication.

You can then use your statement or certificate as proof of your vaccination status. Proof of vaccination status should be sent to info@specialolympics.com.au

Further advice on exemptions and COVID-19 vaccination statements can be found on the ATAGI website: <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-technical-advisory-group-on-immunisation-atagi>

What if I choose not to get vaccinated against COVID- 19 and don’t have a valid exemption?

While we hope that everyone will comply with this policy to keep themselves and each other safe, we do recognise and respect the fact that some will choose not to be vaccinated. Unfortunately, this may mean that members who fail to comply with this policy will be subject to restrictions around what roles and tasks they can undertake with Special Olympics.

Testing

Is Rapid Antigen Testing considered an appropriate control to assist in the mitigating of transmitting and contracting COVID-19?

Rapid Antigen Testing is considered to be a mitigation control which may be used in specified activities. This will be based upon the risk assessment of the activity and current government, health, and ATAGI advice. Rapid Antigen Testing may also be considered within the parameters of approved exemption requests, if deemed appropriate to reduce the known risk. Athletes, families, volunteers, and event guests will be advised on occasion when the use of Rapid Antigen Testing will be applicable.

Decision

Who was involved in making this policy?

This policy was initially agreed to by the national board at the board meeting on Thursday 9 December 2021. The policy was based upon consultation with athletes and volunteers, as well as input from Health Departments, national sporting organisations, national sporting organisations for people with disability, and peak bodies such as the Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability.

Why has this policy been made?

This decision has been made to safeguard the health and safety of the Special Olympics community, including athletes, families, carers, and supporters. COVID-19 vaccination has become widely accepted in Australia with more than 94% of people aged 16 and over fully vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccinations are free for everyone in Australia.

Vaccination benefits now includes:

- protecting yourself against severe illness and death from COVID-19
- preventing complications such as 'long COVID'
- protecting people who can't be vaccinated due to medical conditions
- slowing the spread of the virus
- keeping hospitalisation rates at a level our health system can cope with
- reducing the need for lockdowns and school closures in the future (when enough Australians are vaccinated)
- being able to attend events and travel in the future.

The application of this policy across various settings considers factors such as risk, proportionality, event specific variables, and priorities.

When will this policy be reviewed?

This policy will be reviewed every two months, or as required, to ensure it is informed by the latest public health orders.

How do I prove my vaccination status?

Proof of vaccination status should be sent to info@specialolympics.com.au

What if you can't have a COVID-19 vaccination for medical reasons?

If you can't get any of the approved COVID-19 vaccines for medical reasons, this will be recorded on your immunisation history statement and COVID-19 digital certificate. For any further enquiries, please contact Garth Hogan on garethh@specialolympics.com.au

Training and Club events

What does this mean for sport training?

Everyone attending for sports training must be compliant with this policy.

How do I prove my vaccination status at training?

If required, proof of vaccination status should be sent to info@specialolympics.com.au as part of athlete registration or renewal of membership. Proof of vaccination status should be carried with you and shown when required.

Eligibility and Selection for Competition

What does this mean for sports competition?

Everyone attending sports competitions must be compliant with his policy.

2022 National Games

What does this mean for the National Games?

Everyone attending any event for the 2022 National Games must be compliant with this policy.