



**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19  
Tuesday, 16 November 2021  
Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

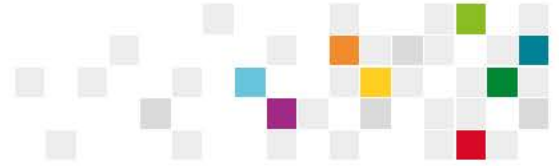
**Response to Question Taken on Notice**

- GOLDFELD, Professor Sharon, Theme Director, Population Health Theme, Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- STEER, Professor Andrew, Theme Director, Infection and Immunity Research Theme, Murdoch Children's Research Institute

**Senator PATERSON:** *"I'd be really interested in any additional information that you could provide on notice about the impact of vaccination on long COVID in children and in adults. I was advised that there had been some preliminary or early studies showing that it might have a positive effect on long COVID symptoms. Anything you can provide on that would be really useful."*

**Response**

- Long COVID is not well understood in children and adolescents, and appears less common than in adults. There are few data describing long COVID in children and adolescents<sup>i</sup>. Persistent symptoms following COVID-19 among children and adolescents include fatigue, headache, anosmia (loss of smell), and sore throat. Some studies have found that children who tested negative for COVID-19 have had similar symptoms over a similar time period, which are common after other viral infections.
- Some of the symptoms of long COVID may also be due to the experience of lockdown and other social restrictions<sup>ii iii</sup>. A study in Melbourne in 2020 (pre-Delta) observed no cases of long COVID among 136 children who presented to the Royal Children's Hospital, noting they were a young cohort (median age three years). More data are needed before a definitive burden can be understood.<sup>iv</sup>
- Among both children and adults, COVID-19 vaccination reduces the risk of severe disease and also of infection. Long COVID is more common after severe COVID. Therefore, it stands to reason that vaccination will also reduce the risk of long-COVID.
- As long COVID is not well understood and seemingly uncommon in children and adolescents, the impact of COVID-19 vaccination on long COVID for them is also not well understood or studied.
- More studies are needed to understand the impact of COVID-19 vaccination on long COVID in both children and adults.



## References

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- <sup>i</sup> Munblit D, Sigfrid L, Warner JO. Setting Priorities to Address Research Gaps in Longterm COVID-19 Outcomes in Children. *JAMA Pediatrics*. 2021.
- <sup>ii</sup> Katz BZ, Shiraishi Y, Mears CJ, Binns HJ, Taylor R. Chronic fatigue syndrome after infectious mononucleosis in adolescents. *Pediatrics*. 2009;124(1):189-93. 29.
- <sup>iii</sup> Jason LA, Katz BZ, Shiraishi Y, Mears CJ, Im Y, Taylor R. Predictors of Post-Infectious Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in Adolescents. *Health Psychol Behav Med*. 2014;2(1):41- 51.
- <sup>iv</sup> Say D, Crawford N, McNab S, Wurzel D, Steer A, Tosif S. Post-acute COVID-19 outcomes in children with mild and asymptomatic disease. *Lancet Child Adolesc Health*. 2021