



Australian Government

## COVID-19 VACCINATION

Keep your disability workforce up to date by circulating this alert widely in your organisation

# Disability provider alert

29 November 2022

### ATAGI recommendation: Pfizer bivalent vaccine

On 15 November 2022, [ATAGI recommended](#) the Pfizer bivalent vaccine can be used for any recommended booster dose for those aged 18 years or older. ATAGI does not prefer bivalent mRNA vaccines over any other vaccines approved for use as boosters. All the currently available COVID-19 vaccines recommended for boosters provide a boost in immunity against COVID-19. This Pfizer bivalent vaccine program is expected to start from 12 December 2022.

### ATAGI recommendation: Pfizer vaccine for children 6 months to 4 years old

On 15 November 2022, [ATAGI recommended](#) a booster dose of the Paediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine be given to children aged 6 months to 4 years, with:

- severe immunocompromise,
- complex or multiple health conditions, or
- disability with significant or complex health needs.

This is expected to be available for children in the recommended groups from January 2023 and will be available in addition to the Moderna vaccine. There is no preference for either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in high-risk children aged 6 months to 4 years.

### COVID-19 – Disability Support Workers

It is important that we ensure continued protection of those most vulnerable to severe illness from COVID-19. This is especially true in settings where there is increased risk of outbreaks occurring. As you are aware, isolation requirements for people who are COVID-19 positive changed on 14 October. The Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) recommends disability support workers do not provide disability support services for 7 days after testing positive for COVID-19. This includes while symptoms persist.

DHAC also continues to encourage disability support workers stay up to date with:

- their [COVID-19 vaccinations](#)
- public health advice and requirements in their state and territory.

Visit your state or territory government health website for more information.

The Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment ended on 14 October. Workers in high-risk settings who test positive for COVID-19 may apply for the High-Risk Settings Pandemic Payment,

effective from 15 October, with Services Australia. A high-risk setting includes disability care, aged care, Aboriginal healthcare and hospital care. Workers from high-risk settings must meet [eligibility criteria](#) to access this payment. Information on the payment and how to apply is available [here](#).

## Infection control in disability settings: training options

Maintaining safe and effective infection control in disability settings is more important than ever. There are a range of online training courses for disability workers:

[Maintaining safe and effective infection control in disability settings](#) (nds.org.au)

This course aims to equip workers with evidence-based knowledge to prevent and control infection according to Work Health Safety legislation, standards and industry codes of practice. It was developed with input from disability workers and focuses on increasing capability of workers with little or no infection control knowledge or skill. It's available online for a fee.

[Supporting People to Stay Infection Free](#) (teamdsc.com.au)

This course covers COVID-19 basics within an overview of the broader approaches to infection prevention and control in disability. It explores how the NDIS Code of Conduct interacts with safety and choice related to infection prevention strategies in people's homes and community activities. The course is free and available online.

[Infection Prevention and Control Skill Set HLTSS00084](#) (training.gov.au)

This short course is designed for existing health and allied health workers, or students studying in these areas. It may also be suitable for people working in other industries where infection prevention and control is important. It is available through several Registered Training Organisations at a fee and is a nationally recognised competency.

[Infection Prevention and Control eLearning Modules](#) (www.safetyandquality.gov.au)

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care offers a number of learning modules and aims to provide detailed information on infection prevention and control in Australian healthcare settings. The modules are free and available online.

## COVID-safe behaviours and vaccines campaigns

DHAC has posted a video on [Facebook](#), featuring Dr Lucas de Toca PSM, discussing COVIDSafe, with an Auslan translation. An advertisement to remind Australians about COVIDSafe behaviours in the current wave is also now airing, featuring Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Michael Kidd AM. This video, and other COVIDSafe and vaccine material are on the [Department of Health and Aged Care website](#).

## Support for people with disability, providers, carers and families

Disability Gateway on **1800 643 787** - open from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday.

Department of Health and Aged Care website at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on **1800 020 080**. People with disability, their families and carers should choose Option 5, disability workers should choose Option 4.

For information in a language other than English, choose Option 8. This is a free service.

The Translating and Interpreting Service is also available on **131 450**.

For people who are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, call the National Relay Service on **133 677**.

## Follow us on Facebook

Don't miss the latest news and updates about COVID-19 and other health matters – follow [the Department of Health and Aged Care on Facebook](#).