



Australian Government

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Disability Provider Alert

8 December 2023

COVID-19 vaccine update

On 20 November 2023, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommended including XBB 1.5 COVID-19 vaccines in the National COVID-19 Vaccine Program. This recommendation matches the current eligibility.

All available COVID-19 vaccines provide benefit to eligible people. The monovalent Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccines are preferred for children aged 5 years or older and adults who are recommended primary or additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine according to the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

For people who have had the recommended [2023 dose/s](#) of COVID-19 vaccine, it is not recommended to receive more doses or re-vaccination with an XBB.1.5 vaccine for now.

The Monovalent Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccines will be available from **11 December 2023**.

COVID-19 is still a health risk

Over the last few years, we have seen a rise in COVID-19 cases during the Christmas/New Year holiday period. ATAGI has noted the increase in COVID-19 cases across Australia since November 2023.

The current COVID-19 wave reminds us that COVID-19 is still in the community and can be dangerous for some people with disability. Vaccination combined with COVID-safe behaviours are the most effective tools in keeping people safe from serious illness.

People over 18, who have disability with significant or complex needs, are recommended to have at least one booster in 2023.

All people who have not yet had their recommended 2023 doses are encouraged to receive them as soon as possible. A [summary of the ATAGI recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses](#) is on the Department of Health and Aged Care website. Healthcare providers can also help people to decide if they should get a COVID-19 vaccination.

Some vaccination services can visit people at home if they cannot travel to the service.

To book an appointment, go to the [service finder](#) or the [Disability Gateway](#).

Disability Worker COVID-19 Leave Grant – final submission period

The final submission period of the [Disability Worker COVID-19 Leave Grant](#) will open for applications on [GrantConnect](#), on **18 December 2023**.

NDIS providers will be eligible for reimbursement under this grant if they make a payment to disability workers who:

1. Provide close personal support to NDIS participants,
2. have lost hours due to a COVID-19 infection, and
3. have insufficient or no sick leave.

Available funding is at a flat rate of:

- \$450 per worker, where the worker lost at least eight hours and up to and including 20 hours of work, and
- \$750 per worker where the worker lost more than 20 hours of work.

Applications are due on **30 January 2024** for payments providers have made to workers for hours lost between **1 October 2023 and 31 December 2023**.

Please note: This is the final submission period under this grant opportunity. Providers will not be able to claim for payments they have made to workers for hours lost after 31 December 2023.

Information about eligibility, how to apply, and a comprehensive set of questions and answers are on [GrantConnect](#).

Information for workers in English and nine other languages, is available online at [Disability Worker COVID-19 Leave Grant](#).

If you have questions about the grant, please contact Support@communitygrants.gov.au.

Support for people with disability, providers, carers, and families
Disability Gateway 1800 643 787, open 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday.

Department of Health and Aged Care website at www.health.gov.au

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

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

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](#).