|  | AUSTRALIAN TECHNICAL ADVISORY  GROUP ON IMMUNISATION (ATAGI)  CLINICAL ADVICE |
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STATEMENT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF COVID-19 VACCINES IN 2024

It is important to read this statement in conjunction with the COVID-19 chapter of the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccine-preventable-diseases/covid-19), available at immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au

## Overview of key points and updates for 2024

* Vaccination remains the most important measure to protect those at risk of severe disease from COVID-19.
* COVID-19 vaccines are recommended every 6 to 12 months for older adults and adults with severe immunocompromise due to their ongoing risk of severe COVID-19.
* Recommendations for people who have never received a COVID-19 vaccine (a ‘primary course’) have been updated. Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook [COVID-19 chapter](https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccine-preventable-diseases/covid-19#recommendations) for further details.
* XBB.1.5-containing vaccines are preferred over other COVID-19 vaccines.
* An XBB.1.5-containing vaccine is not currently available for children aged 6 months—<5 years, however a formulation has been approved for use and supply is anticipated in 2024.
* COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered (given on the same day) with any other vaccine for people aged ≥5 years.
* COVID-19 vaccines remain funded for eligible individuals.
* All vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

## ATAGI recommendations

A summary of the updated advice is presented in Table 1. Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook [COVID-19 chapter](https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccine-preventable-diseases/covid-19#recommendations) for further details. These recommendations will be reviewed annually (or earlier if new evidence emerges or epidemiology changes).

ATAGI **recommends** a dose of COVID-19 vaccine for adults aged ≥75 years every **6 months**.

ATAGI **recommends** the following groups receive a dose of COVID-19 vaccine every **12 months**, and can **consider** a dose every **6 months**, based on a risk-benefit assessment:

* Adults aged 65—74 years
* Adults aged 18—64 years with severe immunocompromise

The following groups can **consider** a COVID-19 vaccine every **12 months**, based on a risk-benefit assessment:

* All other adults aged 18—64 years
* Children and adolescents aged 5—<18 years with severe immunocompromise

**Table 1: Timing of further COVID-19 vaccine doses by age group and risk status**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age | With severe immunocompromise# | Without severe immunocompromise# |
| ≥ 75 years | Recommended every 6 months | Recommended every 6 months |
| 65-74 years | Recommended every 12 months and can consider a dose every 6 months | Recommended every 12 months and can consider a dose every 6 months |
| 18-64 years | Recommended every 12 months and can **consider** a dose every 6 months | Can **consider** a dose every 12 months |
| 5-17 years | Can **consider** every 12 months | Not recommended |
| <5 years | Not recommended | Not recommended |

#See the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccine-preventable-diseases/covid-19) for definitions and examples of severe immunocompromise

**Table 2. COVID-19 vaccines registered and available for use in Australia in March 2024, by age groups**

| Vaccines | Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccines – PREFERRED | | | | Bivalent vaccines | Original (ancestral) vaccines | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 6 month – <5 years formulation | Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 5 – <12 years formulation (light blue cap) | Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 ≥12 years formulation (dark grey cap) | Spikevax Omicron XBB.1.5 (pre-filled syringe) | Comirnaty bivalent Original/Omicron BA.4/5 (grey cap) | Comirnaty Original 6 months – <5 years formulation (maroon cap) | Comirnaty Original 5 – <12 years formulation (orange cap) |
| Recommended Age groups |
| ≥12 years |  |  | ü | ü | ü |  |  |
| 5 to 11 years |  | ü |  |  |  |  | ü |
| 6 months to <5 years | ü\* |  |  |  |  | ü |  |

Ticks indicate age at which a vaccine is registered and available. Blank cells indicate that the vaccine is not available for that age group.

\*Registration approved but supply not available at time of publication

## Highlights for Omicron based XBB.1.5 vaccines

Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 for children aged 6 months to <5 years has been approved by the TGA but is not yet available for use. Once available, it will be preferred for use over ancestral-based vaccines in this age group. Comirnaty XBB.1.5-based formulation is available for use in people aged ≥5 years.

## COVID-19 vaccines funding

COVID-19 vaccinations are funded for all eligible individuals, including those without a Medicare card.