



Australian Government

Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# AUSTRALIAN TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON IMMUNISATION (ATAGI) CLINICAL ADVICE

Issue date: 29 February 2024

## 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), available at [immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au](https://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](#) 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](#) 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 <sup>#</sup>	Without severe immunocompromise <sup>#</sup>
≥ 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 <b>consider</b> a dose every 6 months	Can <b>consider</b> a dose every 12 months
5-17 years	Can <b>consider</b> every 12 months	Not recommended
<5 years	Not recommended	Not recommended

<sup>#</sup>See the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) 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			✓	✓	✓		
5 to 11 years		✓					✓
6 months to <5 years	✓*					✓	

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.