



Australian Government

COVID-19 VACCINATION

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Disability provider alert

25 March 2022

NEW! ATAGI recommends COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose for vulnerable groups

The expert Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends **an additional COVID-19 vaccine dose** for vulnerable groups before winter.

The recommended COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose is to bolster protection from severe illness, hospitalisation or death from COVID-19 over the winter season.

People most at risk of severe complications and those most at risk of serious illness should receive a Winter COVID-19 vaccine dose. This recommendation is for:

- adults aged 65 years and older
- residents of aged care or disability care facilities
- people aged 16 years and older with severe immunocompromise (as defined in a previous [ATAGI statement](#))
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50.

ATAGI recommends that these people should receive their COVID-19 Winter dose from **4 months after their initial booster dose**.

COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses for these groups will be available **from 4 April 2022**.

In some circumstances, individuals may be vaccinated at a shorter interval from their last dose. This is where some flexibility of the minimum interval may facilitate vaccination of a larger proportion of individuals. The additional booster dose should not be administered less than three months from the previous booster dose.

For more information, please see [ATAGI's full statement](#).

Co-administration of COVID-19 Winter dose and annual flu vaccination

Epidemiologists anticipate this year Australia will see an increase in respiratory viruses such as influenza, and in COVID-19 cases in the winter months.

ATAGI advises that COVID-19 Winter doses can be administered at the same time as the annual flu vaccination. Co-administration of COVID-19 Winter doses and influenza vaccines is clinically safe - but you should not delay one while waiting for the other.

Options for your COVID-19 Winter vaccination program

Below are the options available to organise Winter COVID-19 vaccinations for those who meet ATAGI's definition of vulnerable groups at risk.

1. Primary care providers for COVID-19 Winter dose administration

Primary care providers will be the **key delivery channel** for on-site COVID-19 Winter dose vaccinations.

You should work with residents' existing primary care provider to plan for delivery of COVID-19 Winter dose vaccinations as they become eligible. Eligibility is from 4 months after an initial COVID-19 booster dose.

Primary care providers may be able to administer flu vaccinations and COVID-19 vaccinations at the same time. If a primary care provider administers your annual flu vaccinations on-site, you can request they also administer COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses at the same time. Do not delay your flu vaccination clinics if COVID-19 Winter dose vaccinations cannot also be undertaken.

If you need support in organising for a primary care provider to deliver your COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses, please contact your Primary Health Network now.

2. Commonwealth in-reach COVID-19 Winter Dose

Facilities that are unable to secure a primary care provider to administer COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses, either directly or via their Primary Health Network, will be able to request an in-reach service. Further advice will be provided on this process in coming weeks.

Disability workers

While the recommendation for the Winter dose doesn't include disability workers, it is important workers receive a booster to stay up to date. Workers should continue to follow the relevant Public Health Orders in their jurisdictions. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) advised on 16 March 2022 that disability workers require three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine to be up to date. This is to provide protection against both infection and severe disease. Read the full [AHPPC statement](#) on our website.

Why you need a booster even if you've had COVID-19

A booster dose builds on your protection against COVID-19. There is sometimes a misunderstanding that if you have had COVID-19 you cannot get it again, but you still need to get a booster dose to provide the best protection. To be considered 'up to date' you must complete all doses recommended for your age and individual circumstances. For more information visit our [website](#).

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you can have your next dose of the vaccine once you have fully recovered. Alternatively, you can choose to defer the dose for up to 4 months after your COVID-19 infection – but you do not need to wait. Speak with your health care provider about what is best for you.

Booster doses are available from GPs, pharmacies, state/territory vaccination clinics, dedicated disability hubs, and through in-reach from Commonwealth vaccination providers. Visit our [disability clinics webpage](#) for information and help.

Support for providers to assist NDIS participants with vaccination

Temporary payments are available to eligible providers for each participant they support to get their COVID-19 vaccination. These payments include:

- \$150 for each participant a provider supports to get their first and second COVID-19 vaccination.
- \$75 for each participant a provider supports to get their COVID-19 booster vaccine.

The payments allow eligible providers to organise the best way for participants to be vaccinated. This may include organising:

- administration to arrange vaccination appointments including seeking [participant consent](#)
- transport to and from in a COVID-safe way
- appropriate staff to accompany participants to and from the appointments including staying with them during the waiting time after the vaccination.

The current incentives for 1st and 2nd vaccination doses are scheduled to end on 31 March 2022. More information is available on the [NDIS website](#).

Resources to support autistic people through vaccination

Amaze, the peak body for autistic people and their supporters in Victoria, has developed a coronavirus community information hub. The hub has resources to help autistic people and their families access and prepare for vaccination appointments. There is a range of social scripts, a webinar on supporting children to get their vaccination, and a COVID-19 vaccination appointment checklist. There are also guides for health professionals and free training on supporting autistic people through the vaccination process. These resources can help providers in their conversations with autistic people and their carers.

Visit the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Community Information Hub](#) for the full range of resources available.

Assistance for people with disability and their families/friends/providers

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

Department of Health website at www.health.gov.au

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

For information in a language other than English, call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on **1800 020 080** and press 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**.

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