



# COVID-19 Winter dose administration in Residential Aged Care



## Information Kit for Residential Aged Care Providers

26 May 2022

## 1. Introduction

This information kit is a resource for all residential aged care providers, aged care peaks, and unions to support the administration of the COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose in residential aged care.

In this kit, you will find a range of resources, links and information on:

- Options available for administering COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses
- Roles and responsibilities for Commonwealth in-reach clinics
- How to prepare for a Commonwealth in-reach clinic
- What you need to know about the consent process
- How to support residents, their families and substitute decision makers
- How to support workers
- Record keeping and reporting COVID-19 vaccinations and exemptions
- Content to share on your website, social channels and internal communications.

As [advised](#) by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI), an additional booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine is recommended to increase vaccine protection for selected population groups who are at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19. These groups are:

- people aged 65 years and older
- people who are severely immunocompromised
- residents of aged care and disability facilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and older

People aged 16 -64 years:

- who have [a medical condition](#) that increases the risk of severe COVID-19 illness

living with a disability with significant or complex health needs or multiple comorbidities which increase risk of poor outcome from COVID-19.

All residents of residential aged care, and workers who meet the requirements noted above, will be eligible to receive a COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose from four months after the person has received their first booster dose, or from three months after a confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, if infection occurred since the person's first COVID-19 booster dose.

In special circumstances, individuals may be vaccinated at a shorter interval, such as in aged care facilities and remote communities, where some flexibility of the minimum interval may facilitate vaccination of a larger proportion of individuals. However, the additional dose should not be administered less than three months from the previous booster dose.

The COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose is voluntary, but strongly recommended, for residents and other defined vulnerable groups (which may include some aged care workers). All residents and eligible workers should be supported and encouraged to receive their Winter vaccine dose as soon as they are eligible.

All facilities should already be engaging with residents, their families and/or substitute decision makers on the Winter vaccine dose and supporting informed consent discussions. You should ensure you provide or guide residents to answers for any questions or concerns they have, support them to talk to a general practitioner or other health professional, and provide information to family and carers as needed.

All facilities are expected to have now shared the fact sheet on the COVID-19 Winter dose vaccination program with your residents and their families.

Stay up to date with the latest information here: [Information for Residential Aged Care Providers](#)

Thank you for everything you do to keep residents and workers safe.

COVID-19 Vaccine Aged Care

Department of Health

## 2. Co-administration of the COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose and annual flu vaccination

ATAGI advises that COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses can be administered at the same time as the annual flu vaccination.

Co-administration of COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses and influenza vaccines for residents is both clinically safe and administratively efficient. It is however the choice of the individual and residents should be encouraged to consult with their GP or other health professional.

In planning your winter vaccine programs, aged care providers are encouraged to:

- identify and optimise opportunities for co-administration of COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses and flu vaccines where possible.
- **not delay the administering of flu vaccines** to residents if co-administration is not possible or is likely to delay flu vaccination.
- **Ensure residents understand it is their choice as to whether they wish to receive both vaccines at the same time.**

### 3. Options for your COVID-19 Winter vaccination program

Below are the options available to your facility to organise your COVID-19 Winter vaccinations for residents, and for workers who meet ATAGI's definition of [vulnerable groups at risk](#).

#### 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 in residential aged care.

Each facility should work with their existing primary care providers to plan for delivery of COVID-19 Winter dose vaccinations as residents become eligible (i.e. from four months after an initial COVID-19 booster dose).

If a facility's annual flu vaccinations are administered on-site by a primary care provider, they can request the administration of COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses at the same time or, if required, separately.

Providers should contact their Primary Health Network if they require assistance in organising for a primary care provider to deliver the COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses. Providers should make a clear plan for residents to receive a COVID-19 Winter dose vaccine when they become eligible if the main vaccination clinic date/s occur before they are eligible.

#### Aged care provider on-site COVID-19 Winter dose clinics

Aged care providers previously approved by the Commonwealth to conduct self-run on-site COVID-19 vaccination clinics can opt to run their own COVID-19 Winter Dose clinics.

These aged care providers can also opt to administer flu vaccinations at the same time, if authorised to do so by their respective state or territory government. It is important to note that only the COVID-19 vaccination component will be covered under the provider's contract with the Commonwealth.

#### Commonwealth in-reach COVID-19 Winter Dose Clinics

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, can request an in-reach Commonwealth COVID-19 Winter Dose Vaccination clinic.

To register for a clinic, providers are required to complete the [online form](#).

Facilities can ask their Primary Health Network to register on their behalf if required.

Please note that the Commonwealth clinics will only deliver COVID-19 vaccines. Facilities will be required to make separate arrangements for administration of flu vaccines unless they have a contracted commercial provider to administer their annual flu vaccinations, and this provider is also contracted by the Commonwealth to deliver in-reach COVID-19 Winter dose clinics in their area.

The provider will need to agree to administer both vaccine programs at the same time. Facilities will be required to organise the flu vaccination component directly with that provider.

## 4. Vaccine delivery arrangements for Commonwealth in-reach COVID-19 Winter Dose Clinics

In most instances, Commonwealth and primary care vaccine providers will bring vaccines with them on the day of your clinic, as was the case with the COVID-19 booster vaccination program in residential aged care.

In some cases, vaccines will be delivered to a facility in advance of a clinic. You will be notified if your facility will receive a vaccine delivery.

The process for the delivery and acceptance of vaccine doses for clinics run by Commonwealth vaccine providers is detailed in the below three documents. Note the process for vaccine delivery and acceptance for clinics run by residential aged care providers will differ and the Department will provide advice directly to these facilities.



What to do when  
your COVID-19 vaccir



Site readiness for  
receiving Pfizer Vaccir



Australian  
Government Pfizer CC

Please familiarise yourself with the above processes so that you are prepared if your facility receives vaccines on site.

## 5. COVID-19 Vaccine Aged Care roles and responsibilities

When on site, vaccination providers will be able to administer vaccines for any resident or worker that needs one.

The following information provides the roles and responsibilities for Commonwealth in-reach COVID-19 Winter Dose Clinics.

*Note that different arrangements apply for clinics delivered by primary care providers and for facilities conducting their own on-site clinics.*

### Residential aged care facilities

Residential aged care facilities are responsible for hosting in-reach COVID-19 Winter dose vaccination clinics and supporting residents and eligible workers to access a COVID-19 vaccine safely and effectively. Key responsibilities include:

- Liaising with primary care providers and Primary Health Networks to secure local access to deliver in-reach vaccine services as a first option.
- Supporting residents and their family, carers and loved ones, and residential aged care workers to access trusted information on the Winter dose and clinic.
- Managing consent processes for residents (refer [COVID-19 vaccination – Consent guidance for residential aged care](#) and [COVID-19 vaccination – Consent process flow chart](#)).
- Planning with vaccine providers for a clinic including:
  - setting a clinic date
  - determining how the site will be configured to support the safe and efficient operation of the clinic on the day, and compliance with Pfizer site readiness requirements (refer [COVID-19 vaccination – Site readiness checklist](#)).
- Preparing the facility for the clinic (refer [COVID-19 vaccination – Planning checklist](#)) including:
  - the physical environment
  - residents
  - staff, and
  - family, health professionals and other support people.
- Accepting a vaccine delivery to your facility (in limited circumstances), completing necessary paperwork, and storing the vaccines in accordance with the information and instructions provided.
- Preparing residents for the clinic including assessing their clinical suitability for a vaccine on the day and post clinic monitoring and reporting any adverse events (refer [COVID-19 vaccination – Clinical governance requirements](#)).
- Reporting resident and worker vaccinations through My Aged Care.

### Commonwealth vaccine providers

Vaccine providers are responsible for delivering vaccine services consistent with their contractual obligations with the Commonwealth and any supporting policy, guidance or instructions issued by the National COVID Vaccine Taskforce or the Department of Health. Key vaccine provider responsibilities include:

- Consulting and engaging with Primary Health Networks to develop plans and schedules for the delivery of vaccine services. Primary Health Networks' local intelligence and relationships with residential aged care facilities should be actively considered.
- Directly engaging with residential aged care facilities to support effective and timely planning and scheduling of vaccine clinics. Timing must enable residential aged care facilities a sufficient period (typically not less than one week) to seek consent from substitute decision-makers (where in place) through a supported decision-making process.
- Developing schedules that deliver vaccine services to residential aged care facilities.

- Undertaking site readiness assessments to ensure the clinic environment complies with the requirements for the release of the Pfizer vaccine.
- Delivering vaccine services that focus on the resident experience and are completed safely and efficiently.
- Uploading vaccine records to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

### Primary Health Networks

Primary Health Networks are a key delivery partner and have an integral role in engaging with residential aged care facilities, vaccine providers, and the Department to assist the efficient and effective delivery of the Winter dose vaccine program. Key Primary Health Network responsibilities include:

- Liaison and communication with residential aged care facilities to provide information and support. Primary Health Networks continue to be residential aged care facilities' first point of contact for all assistance related to accessing a COVID-19 vaccine. Primary Health Networks will provide information to residential aged care facilities including in relation to:
  - engaging with a primary care provider
  - Winter vaccines and the residential aged care Winter dose program
  - the clinic schedules
  - consent processes
  - vaccine provider contact, vaccine delivery and 'what to expect', and
  - the facility's allocated vaccine provider.
- Liaison and engagement with vaccine providers to inform the development of plans and schedules for the delivery of vaccine services in the Primary Health Network region for facilities that are unable to organise administration of the vaccine through a primary care provider or self-run clinic. This includes providing local intelligence and information, including on specific residential aged care facilities that will assist the delivery of a safe and efficient vaccine program.
- Escalating issues to the Department for formal consideration and resolution.

## 6. Preparing for your Commonwealth in-reach COVID-19 Winter Dose Clinic

The following resources are available to help you plan and prepare for a Commonwealth in-reach COVID-19 Winter Dose Clinic.

[Planning checklist for vaccination day](#) – this simple checklist provides advice and tips to assist your planning and delivery of a safe and efficient COVID-19 vaccination clinic in residential aged care.

[Clinical governance requirements](#) – this document steps out the requirements for a residential aged care facility and the vaccine provider in planning and preparing for a COVID-19 Winter dose vaccination clinic on the day of the clinic, and after the clinic.

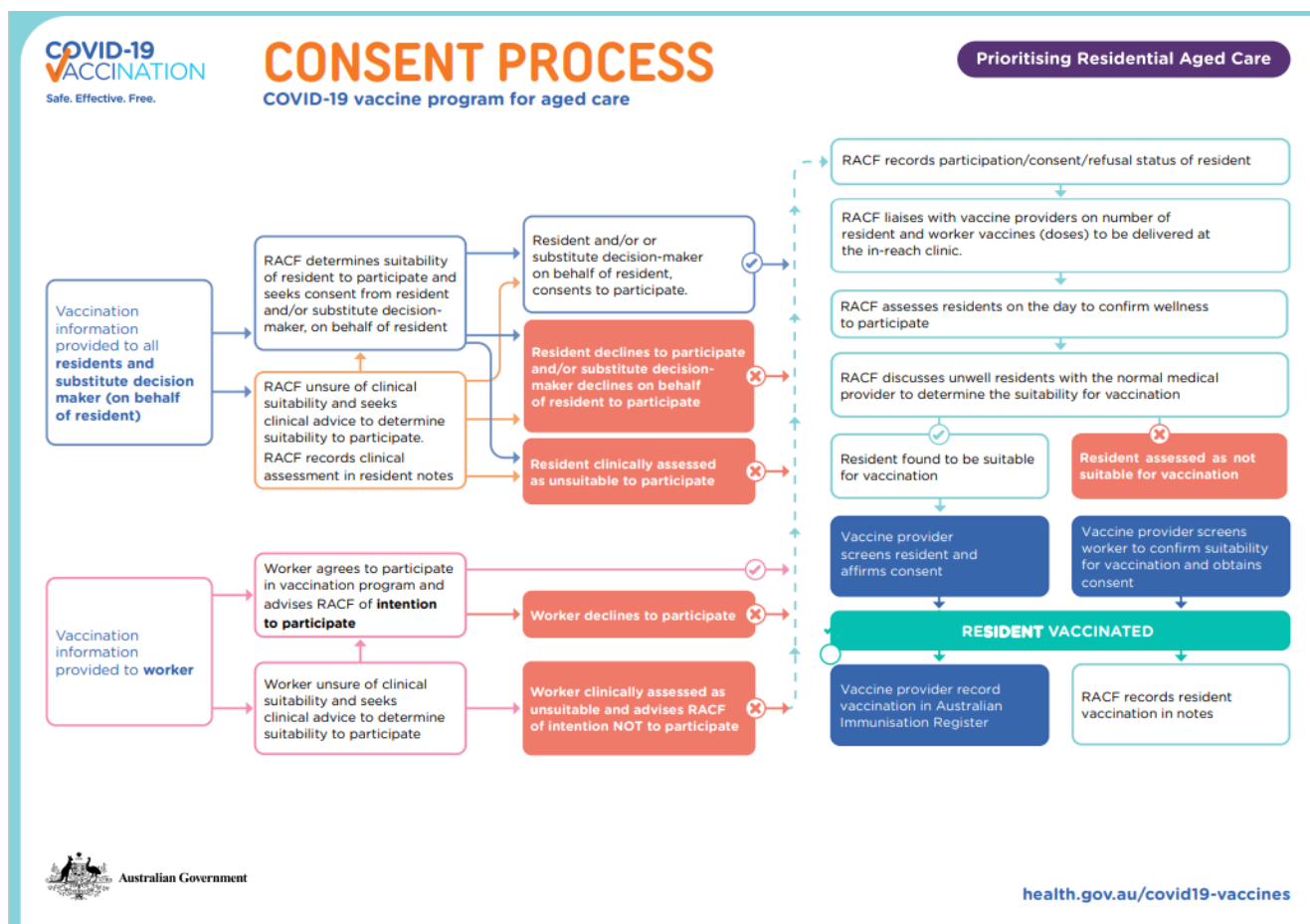
[Site readiness checklist](#) – The site readiness requirements for COVID-19 vaccination clinics at residential aged care facilities include requirements developed in consultation with expert advice from ATAGI. Residential aged care COVID-19 vaccination clinic sites must comply with the requirements outlined prior to delivery of vaccine doses.

[What to expect on vaccination day](#) – all facilities are expected to provide this important document to residents, families and carers about what to expect in the lead up to, and on vaccination day.



## 7. What you need to know about the consent process

As with all other vaccines, informed consent is required for each COVID-19 vaccine dose, including Winter doses. Residential aged care providers are responsible for this [process](#) which must be completed ahead of the vaccination day.



Further guidance is available on [consent in the residential aged care context](#), providing considerations for consent to primary course, booster and Winter doses in the residential aged care context.

### How does my facility capture consent?

There are two ways to capture resident consent:

written consent – you can use the Australian Government’s [written consent form](#) or use your own form. If you use your own consent form, you must capture the necessary information to show that the resident consents to a COVID-19 vaccine.

verbal consent – if you receive verbal consent, you must record it in a resident’s care notes, following usual practices.

### Does my facility need to receive consent prior to the primary course (first and second dose), a booster dose and a Winter dose?

Yes. You are required to support residents to consent to receiving a COVID-19 Winter dose and to making the consent forms available to the vaccine provider on the day of clinic.

You must keep a record of the resident's consent. This record is used to confirm consent prior to vaccination.

If you are obtaining consent verbally, you must confirm if consent is being provided for the Winter dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Record this through your usual practices.

The Department of Health's [consent form](#) provides that consent is for a primary course of a COVID-19 vaccine (two doses of the same vaccine), a third dose for people who are severely immunocompromised, a booster dose, or an additional dose four months after a booster vaccination.

Residential aged care providers are responsible for keeping consent records for all residents.

Vaccine providers may request a copy of residents' consent records from the residential aged care facility. You can provide this on request, however, must retain the original consent records on site.

For more information about valid consent, refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook: [Preparing for vaccination – Valid consent](#).

Some jurisdictions have specific requirements relevant to guardians (or substitute decision-makers) consenting on behalf of another person. Refer to relevant state and territory laws for more information.

### **Informing your residents**

It is important that every resident is being actively engaged and supported in understanding the importance of the Winter dose to further protect and save lives.

Please also ensure your residents, their families and substitute decision makers are aware of support available from the [Older Persons Advocacy Network](#).

You need to provide them with detailed and accurate information BEFORE vaccination day:

- [Fact sheet for residents and families on COVID-19 Winter vaccination program](#)
- [Preparing for COVID-19 vaccination](#)
- [What to expect on vaccination day](#)
- [Consent form](#).

These information sheets are available in [other languages](#).

## 8. Engaging with your workers

Any workers from the [identified vulnerable cohorts](#) who received their booster dose vaccination more than four months ago are eligible to receive a COVID-19 Winter dose. These workers should be offered vaccination at the same time as your residents. The COVID-19 Winter dose is voluntary.

Workers requiring a first, second, third or booster dose can also receive their vaccination at the same time as your residents, either through a primary care provider, self-run clinic or Commonwealth in-reach COVID-19 Winter Dose Clinic.

Facilities should provide workers plenty of notice on the date of their COVID-19 vaccine program and workers must complete a [consent form](#) prior to the day of vaccination.

Please consider your rosters for the day of, and day after, your vaccination program to ensure continuity of coverage of care to your residents while optimising the opportunity for workers to receive a Winter dose or other required doses.

It is important to clearly communicate to your workers that COVID-19 Winter doses are voluntary and only for those people defined by ATAGI as being at particular risk.

If a worker is eligible for a Winter dose and not able to get vaccinated on the day, or will not yet be eligible yet due to the timing since their initial booster, they can book an appointment using the [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder](#) at state and territory vaccination clinics, GPs and pharmacies. Workers can also call the dedicated COVID-19 Helpline on **1800 020 080** (select option 4) for any questions about vaccination and for assistance on how to book an appointment.

## 9. Recording and reporting COVID-19 booster vaccinations and exemptions

It is mandatory for residential aged care providers to keep records and report de-identified data weekly via the My Aged Care provider portal. Residential aged care workforce COVID-19 vaccination rates by residential aged care facility are available via an [interactive map](#).

Currently, the provider portal reporting fields for reporting de-identified data on residential aged care workforce COVID-19 vaccination status at an outlet level are the:

- total number of service staff providing services
- number of service staff who have received a single dose only of a COVID-19 vaccine
- number of service staff who have received two doses only of a COVID-19 vaccine
- number of service staff who have received one booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine
- number of service staff with an authorised permanent exemption to a COVID-19 vaccination, or who are not required to be vaccinated, for medical reasons
- number of service staff with an authorised temporary exemption to a COVID-19 vaccination, or who are not required to be vaccinated, on a temporary basis for medical reasons
- number of service staff with an authorised temporary exemption to a COVID-19 vaccination, or who are not required to be vaccinated, due to inability to access a COVID-19 vaccine
- number of service staff with an authorised temporary exemption to a COVID-19 vaccination, or who are not required to be vaccinated, due to a critical workforce shortage OR to maintain the provision of quality of care OR to protect the health and safety of care recipients
- number of service staff with an authorised exemption related to another category in the relevant State/Territory public health order, or who are not required to be vaccinated under the public health order.

The provider portal reporting fields for reporting de-identified data on aged care residents' COVID-19 vaccination status at an outlet level are the:

- total number of residents at the service
- number of residents at the service who are unwilling or clinically unsuitable to receive one or more doses of a COVID-19 vaccine
- number of unvaccinated residents at the service who are willing and clinically suitable to be vaccinated
- number of residents at the service who have received a single dose only of a COVID-19 vaccine, who are willing and clinically suitable to receive additional doses
- number of residents at the service who have received two doses only of a COVID-19 vaccine, who are willing and clinically suitable to receive additional doses
- number of severely immunocompromised residents at the service who have received three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, who are willing and clinically suitable to receive additional doses
- number of residents at the service who have received a booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, who are willing and clinically suitable to receive additional doses
- number of residents at the service who have received a Winter dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Providers with multiple My Aged Care outlets co-located at one residential aged care site operating as one facility are requested to use one outlet ID for reporting their worker and resident vaccination information in the provider portal. If the sites operate completely independently, they should be reported against each outlet ID.

Residential aged care workers are required to notify their employer of their COVID-19 vaccination status under state and territory public health orders on mandatory vaccination in residential aged care.

**Winter doses for eligible workers are voluntary.**

Providers are required to ensure that residential aged care workers are vaccinated against COVID-19 in accordance with the [relevant public health order](#) in their state or territory.

All states and territories have mandated a primary course and a booster dose for residential aged care workers.

Failure to comply with public health orders and to enact sufficient measures to adequately minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection, including through workforce vaccination, will inform assessment of performance against the Aged Care Quality Standards and may result in compliance action by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission).

The Commission will continue to receive COVID-19 vaccination data reported by providers and use this to assess risks to care recipients. Providers failing to report, or reporting low vaccination levels, will be assessed as higher risk.

Information about the Commission's regulatory approach, regarding compliance with mandatory vaccination requirements, is available [here](#).

See: [Guidance for residential aged care providers on reporting of COVID-19 vaccinations and exemptions of residents and workers](#)

## 10. Suggested e-Newsletter and web content

### COVID-19 Winter vaccination program in residential aged care to ensure optimum protection

The [name of facility] is proud to be providing a COVID-19 Winter dose vaccination clinic to further protect our residents and workforce.

“Medical experts recommend an additional dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to optimise protection for residents of aged care facilities and other vulnerable groups over the winter season,” said [insert facility spokesperson].

“It is recommended that vulnerable groups receive a COVID-19 Winter dose from four months after a booster vaccine to bolster a person’s protection against severe illness or hospitalisation.”

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommend the COVID-19 Winter dose for:

- people aged 65 years and older
- people who are severely immunocompromised
- residents of aged care and disability facilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and older
- people aged 16 -64 years:
  - who have [a medical condition](#) that increases the risk of severe COVID-19 illness
  - living with a disability with significant or complex health needs or multiple comorbidities which increase risk of poor outcome from COVID-19.

On xx Month 2022 we will be visited by [insert vaccine provider] who will be administering COVID-19 vaccines, including primary, booster and Winter doses.

[Name of facility] is committed to supporting our residents and vulnerable workers to make an informed decision about consenting to a COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose.

“We are engaging with our residents, their families and loved ones to talk about how a Winter dose will be beneficial for residents’ continued protection,” said [insert spokesperson].

“We are also supporting our workers who are eligible to receive their winter dose. As with our previous booster programs, these workers can receive their vaccination alongside our residents, if they choose to do so.”

The Pfizer (Comirnaty) COVID-19 vaccine is being used for the Winter dose program in residential aged care. However, if preferred, you can receive the Moderna (Spikevax) or, if medically required, the AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria) vaccine. We can arrange for you to receive either of these vaccines, including from a general practitioner or pharmacist.

In addition, if you are eligible and would like to receive your COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose before the XXth, please let us know and we will organise an alternative vaccination plan for you.

If you are not eligible for your COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose at the time of our vaccination clinic, we will support you in having access to your vaccination at a later date.

## 11. Suggested content for direct email to workers

### Who is recommended to get a COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose?

#### What you need to know

Thank you for protecting yourself, your co-workers and residents in our care by keeping up to date with your COVID-19 vaccination.

More than 94 per cent of residential aged care workers nationally have demonstrated their commitment to keeping residents and colleagues safe by receiving their booster vaccinations.

The expert Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends an additional COVID-19 vaccine dose for people considered at most risk from the impacts of COVID-19:

- people aged 65 years and older
- people who are severely immunocompromised
- residents of aged care and disability facilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and older

people aged 16 -64 years:

- who have [a medical condition](#) that increases the risk of severe COVID-19 illness

living with a disability with significant or complex health needs or multiple comorbidities which increase risk of poor outcome from COVID-19.

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

We will be organising on-site vaccination clinics for residents to receive their Winter vaccine dose.

If you meet the above criteria for vulnerable people at risk, and it is four months since you received your initial booster, you can receive your COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose at our on-site vaccination clinic.

In special circumstances, ATAGI advise it is safe to receive a COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose for those who are eligible at a shorter interval than four months from receiving an initial booster, but no less than three months

The Winter dose is voluntary for all vulnerable groups. If you are eligible as a vulnerable person, it is your choice whether you get the additional COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose.

ATAGI has recommended the Comirnaty (Pfizer) and Spikevax (Moderna) COVID-19 vaccines for the Winter dose, irrespective of the vaccine a person received for their primary and booster vaccinations.

#### How to get your vaccination

On **XX Month 2022 insert facility name** will be holding a COVID-19 Winter vaccination clinic for residents.

If you are eligible for a COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose, or require a primary or booster dose, you are encouraged to be vaccinated at this clinic.

Alternatively, you can book an appointment at a COVID-19 vaccination clinic near you using the online COVID-19 [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#).

When you book your appointment, identify yourself as an aged care worker and your vaccination will be scheduled as quickly as possible and usually within seven days of your request. If needed, you can take a [proof of employment](#) letter to your vaccination appointment showing that you have priority access to a COVID-19 vaccination.

#### Do you need help or more information?

If you have questions about getting your COVID-19 primary, booster or Winter dose vaccination, please call the dedicated Helpline on 1800 020 080 and select option 4 at any time.

For interpreting services call 131 450.

If you are concerned about vaccination, please talk to your doctor as soon as possible.

Visit the [Department of Health's website](#) for more information, including translated information and answers to frequently asked questions.



## 12. Frequently asked questions

### Booster vaccinations for aged care residents and eligible workers

#### Who is recommended to receive a Winter dose?

Similar to other respiratory viruses such as the flu, it is likely an increase in COVID-19 cases will be seen over winter.

As with many vaccinations, the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccinations reduce over time.

Now, with winter coming, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation recommends that the following groups of receive an additional COVID-19 vaccination dose to maximise their protection against severe illness.

- people aged 65 years and older
- people who are severely immunocompromised
- residents of aged care and disability facilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and older
- People aged 16 -64 years:
- who have [a medical condition](#) that increases the risk of severe COVID-19 illness
- living with a disability with significant or complex health needs or multiple comorbidities which increase risk of poor outcome from COVID-19.
- If you meet these criteria you are strongly encouraged to receive your COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose to give yourself the best possible protection against serious illness.

#### What vaccine will I get?

The Comirnaty (Pfizer) and Spikevax (Moderna) COVID-19 vaccines are approved by the [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) (TGA) and recommended by ATAGI as a COVID-19 Winter dose. The Pfizer vaccine will be predominantly used for all Commonwealth in-reach COVID-19 Winter Dose Clinic at residential aged care facilities.

You can have the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine as a Winter dose regardless of which vaccine you had for your first two doses or booster dose. You can also receive the AstraZeneca vaccine if you can't have the Pfizer vaccine for medical reasons

#### How do I get a Winter dose?

Your facility will arrange for vaccines to be administered to you by a primary care provider, a self-run clinic, or a Commonwealth in-reach COVID-19 Winter Dose Clinic.

ATAGI recommends vulnerable groups receive their COVID-19 Winter dose from four months after their initial booster dose.

In special circumstances, individuals may be vaccinated at a shorter interval, such as in aged care facilities and remote communities, 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 initial booster dose.

If you are not yet eligible to receive your COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose, you are unable to attend your facility's vaccination clinic on the day, or your facility is not hosting a Winter dose clinic:

- Residents can talk to their facility staff about arranging a visit from a general practitioner or pharmacist at a later time.
- Workers can find a COVID-19 vaccination clinic near them using the online [vaccine clinic finder](#).

Workers can access priority appointments at:

- General practices
- Pharmacies
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- State and territory-run vaccination clinics.

Workers can also call the dedicated Helpline on 1800 020 080 and select option 4 at any time.

### How soon can I get my Winter dose?

ATAGI recommends that vulnerable groups receive their COVID-19 Winter dose from four months after their initial booster dose, or from 3 months after a confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, if infection occurred since the person's first COVID-19 booster dose.

In special circumstances, individuals may be vaccinated at a shorter interval, such as in aged care facilities and remote communities, 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.

### Are Winter doses safe?

Yes. Common, mild side effects following a Winter dose look similar to the side effects following the primary and booster doses. See patient information about the [Pfizer vaccine](#) and [Moderna vaccine](#).

ATAGI will continue to review the risk-benefit equation on booster doses.

### Can I get sick from vaccination?

Most vaccines have side effects, and the COVID-19 vaccines are no different. It's important to note that everyone's immune system is unique.

Most side effects last no more than a couple of days and they go away without any problems.

Common reactions to vaccination include:

- pain, redness and/or swelling where you received the needle
- mild fever
- headache.

Some people will experience more significant flu-like symptoms from the vaccine, compared to other common vaccinations, and may need time away from normal activities.

### Do I have to pay for the vaccine?

No. COVID-19 vaccines are administered free-of-charge irrespective of whether they are first, second, third (for the immunocompromised), booster or Winter dose. You do not have to have a Medicare card to access a free vaccine.

### Are Winter doses mandatory for workers?

No. Winter doses are recommended for workers who are considered to be vulnerable/at risk but not mandatory. It is mandatory for workers to get a primary course and booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

### My question isn't answered here – who can I talk to?

If you have questions about getting your COVID-19 vaccination, please call the dedicated Helpline on 1800 020 080 and select option 3 at any time.

If you are concerned about vaccination, please talk to your doctor as soon as possible.

Visit the [Department of Health's website](#) for more information, including translated information and answers to frequently asked questions.

### 13. Social media posts

	Text	Image
Facebook	<p>We will be holding a COVID-19 Winter Dose vaccination clinic on XXXXXXXX to keep our residents safe.</p> <p>The expert Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends an additional COVID-19 vaccine dose for residents in aged care facilities.</p> <p>The recommended COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose is to ensure our residents have optimum protection against COVID-19 over the winter season.</p> <p>Stay protected.</p> <p>Find out more about the program at <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/">https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/</a></p> <p>#COVID19 #health #agedcare #vaccinate #stayprotected</p>	Pending
Twitter	<p>To continue to protect people living in residential aged care, COVID-19 Winter vaccine doses are being administered across Australia.</p> <p>Find more information at <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/">https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/</a></p>	