



COVID-19 VACCINATION

Phase 1B General Practice Vaccine Rollout

Update – 25 May, 2021

ATAGI/THANZ statement

For your information, ATAGI released a [joint statement](#) on Sunday, 23 May with the Thrombosis and Haemostasis Society of Australia and New Zealand (THANZ) on Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) and the use of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca.

The statement reaffirms that for people aged 50 years and over, the expert medical advice is that the benefit of receiving the vaccination outweighs the risk of this rare but serious side-effect.

This statement and a letter from the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has been distributed to all primary care vaccination providers. We have also attached the talking points that practices have received to support their conversations with patients on the risks and benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Your assistance in ensuring all general practitioners know and understand the latest advice and in directing any concerns to the available resources is much appreciated.

TGA extension of Pfizer storage period

As of Monday, 24 May, the TGA has **extended the approved storage period** of the unopened thawed Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine.

This change now extends the storage period of an unopened thawed vial at 2-8°C (i.e. in a normal refrigerator after taking out of deep-freeze conditions) to **up to one month (31 days)**.

This approval allows much greater flexibility for vaccine providers across Australia.

We would appreciate if you could distribute this information to your networks (as relevant) as soon as possible. Details can be found on the [TGA website](#).

Increase to AstraZeneca dose allocations

Further to the last increase to AstraZeneca doses for low and medium allocation primary care providers, those practices with high allocations and utilisation will now receive an increase. This dose increase will enable them to continue to provide first doses to patients, while ensuring sufficient supply to administer second doses.

For these high allocation practices, this increase will commence immediately – with additional doses available to administer from week 15.

In addition, low and medium allocation practices will receive an additional increased AstraZeneca allocation. This increase will target more than 800 small or medium general practices in locations where additional supply is required to meet the population demand. The boost in doses for these practices will be available from this week's order cycle, to administer from week 16.

Affected practices have received a letter notifying them of their allocation change.

Transfer of AstraZeneca Vaccine stock between participating general practices

Practices can now transport AstraZeneca vaccine stock between participating sites, as outlined in the attached policy. Transfers are the responsibility of the sites to manage (e.g. maintain cold-chain, etc.) and must be captured within the weekly Stock Management Report in CVAS (due 9pm Fridays).

The Stock Management Report is currently being updated to allow this, and is expected to be updated this week. An email will be sent from CVAS to all participating sites informing them when the update to the report goes live.

For information about this, please refer general practices to [The National Vaccine Storage Guidelines](#) (Strive for 5) for information and advice on vaccine storage, including transportation. Sites should ensure all appropriate requirements for transport are met.

We have encouraged vaccination sites to reach out to their PHNs if they need assistance with the identifying locations to transfer stock to.

Social media tiles for non-participating general practices

We have received feedback from non-participating general practices that they are unsure how to refer their patients to participating COVID-19 vaccination providers to get vaccinated.

We would like your help to communicate to non-participating general practices that **they can refer their patients to the COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker to find a COVID-19 vaccination site**. The COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker can be accessed at [Health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)

Practices can also refer their patients to the **National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on 1800 020 080**. The helpline can give patients more information about locating a vaccine clinic near them and providing them the contact information to make a booking.

We have also attached social media tiles and provided captions below that general practices can use on their social media channels.

We would appreciate if you could distribute these resources and information to your networks.

Messaging	Caption
Booking an appointment	If you are eligible for vaccination, you can book an appointment at a clinic near you by completing the COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker - https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility
Finding a clinic near you	If you are eligible for vaccination, you can complete the COVID-19 Eligibility Checker to find vaccination clinics near you - https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility
Unable to book appointment	More appointments for COVID-19 vaccination will become available as more vaccination sites come on-board. Please continue to check the COVID-19 Eligibility Checker if you're currently unable to make an appointment - https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility

Checking patient medical history

We have been advised that some people have potentially received:

- more than two doses of COVID-19 vaccines
- doses of different vaccines, and
- the influenza vaccine within 14 days of a COVID-19 vaccine (on the same day in some occasions).

We would appreciate your help in promoting ATAGI's advice on dosage intervals. Please also reiterate the importance of **checking each patient's immunisation history before administering vaccines (both Fluvax and COVID-19)**.

ATAGI does not recommend routine scheduling and co-administration of an influenza vaccine with a COVID-19 vaccine on the same day. The preferred minimum interval between a dose of seasonal influenza vaccine and a dose of Comirnaty (Pfizer) or COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca is 14 days.

A patient's immunisation history can be viewed through:

- **the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)**
- **Clinician Vaccine Integrated Platform (CVIP), or**
- **My Health Record.**

It is now easier to see a consolidated immunisation view on My Health Record in most clinical systems, without needing software updates by practices.

For more information about this update, please refer general practices to this media release: <https://www.digitalhealth.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/recent-media-releases/patient-immunisation-details-now-more-easily-available-to-healthcare-providers-in-their-clinical-information-systems>

New resources:

We have developed and attached the following new resources for use by vaccine providers:

- [Updated COVID-19 vaccine provider communication kit](#)
- [Talking to patients about AstraZeneca vaccine](#)

We would appreciate if you could distribute these resources to your networks.