

Checking Vaccine Expiry Immediately Prior to Administration

Dear Pharmacy,

The Taskforce has received increased reports of vaccine administration errors involving health practitioners administering expired vaccines to patients.

As such, we remind vaccinators to ensure they are **checking the COVID-19 vaccine expiry date prior to vaccine administration**. This includes checking:

- Manufacturer expiry (printed on vial)
- Expiry date and time of vial (due to temperature and time-since-piercing vial limits)
- Syringe expiry time (if drawn up in advance)

Use of talkback techniques with patients on vaccine brand and expiry immediately prior to administration can be useful as an additional safety check. Further, when entering vaccine data into clinical software, double check the batch and expiry numbers as some providers have reported their computer system's prefill function has inputted incorrect information into these fields.

Storing vaccine

When placing the vaccines in the fridge, the expiry dates must be checked, and stock rotated to ensure vaccines are used prior to expiring. It is recommended the recipient of the vaccine at the site should place a use by or defrost date on each tray upon arrival.

Community pharmacies should also refer to the specific vaccine's product information and ensure that storage requirements are complied with to maintain efficacy of the vaccine. For vaccine product information see:

- [Pfizer](#)
- [Moderna](#)
- [AstraZeneca](#)

Expired vaccine

Any administration of expired vaccine should be reported immediately to the [Vaccine Operation Centre](#) (VOC), which will arrange for clinical advice to be provided to the vaccinator based on the case.

Doses due to expire before they are likely to be used are considered excess. Where this is likely, pharmacies are encouraged to follow the process for managing excess stock (as advised by the PPA via email on 22 October 2021). If pharmacies are unable to transfer excess stock and it expires, pharmacies need to complete a wastage report in CVAS and

dispose of expired vaccine in their sharps container or clinical waste bin. Stock that expires despite all efforts is an unfortunate aspect of the vaccination program which is not always avoidable.

The above is an expectation of all health care professionals.

Around 2 million COVID-19 vaccines have now been administered by community pharmacy providers. The Taskforce and PPA appreciates the ongoing role of community pharmacies in supporting and implementing the national COVID-19 vaccine rollout to protect our community.

For more information on COVID-19 vaccine storage and handling click [here](#).

Kind regards,

Pharmacy Programs Administrator