

ATAGI BOOSTER UPDATE | EXCESS DOSES | VOC HOLIDAY HOURS, ORDERS & DELIVERY | VCF UPDATE

Dear Service Provider,

This email provides information about a range of matters relevant to participating pharmacies in the COVID-19 Vaccination in Community Pharmacy Program (CVCP), as follows:

- ATAGI Booster Update
- Managing excess doses
- Vaccine Operation Centre opening hours, orders and deliveries during the holiday period
- Vaccine Clinic Finder Update.

ATAGI Booster Update

As previously advised, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommended the interval at which people become eligible for a booster be reduced to five or more months – and the Moderna COVID vaccine can be used as a booster.

ATAGI has updated their advice, [available here](#), in light of the recent cases of the Omicron variant:

- **Individuals who become eligible for a COVID-19 booster dose before or during the December and New Year holiday period (i.e. up to 3 January 2022) can receive them earlier than five months.**
- Timely receipt of a booster dose is particularly important for those who have risk factors for:
 - **severe disease** – particularly older age and those with underlying medical conditions; or
 - **people with increased exposure risk** – such as occupational risks or outbreak areas.

Importantly:

- Both Comirnaty (Pfizer) or Spikevax (Moderna- 50µg) are recommended for use as a booster vaccine, and both are considered equally acceptable.

- A third (primary) dose of COVID-19 vaccine is also recommended for anyone with severe immunocompromise, a minimum of two months after their second dose.

Pharmacies are encouraged to continue to support access to vaccination for priority groups such as residential aged care and disability care residents and workers, those with underlying medical conditions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, frontline health care workers, quarantine and border workers, and critical and high-risk workers.

A reminder, **Vaccination Incentive Payments are available** for community pharmacies to deliver and claim until 30 June 2022.

- **Site Visit payment** (flag fall) of \$57.25 for pharmacies who visit vulnerable patients and workers to administer COVID-19 vaccinations.
- **Residential Care Incentive payment** to vaccinate workers and residents at residential aged care and residential disability care facilities.

Further information about incentive payments is outlined in the [CVCP Program Rules](#).

Managing Excess Doses

The Taskforce is continuing to actively work with vaccination providers to manage excess vaccine stock on hand.

We encourage pharmacies to reach out to their local networks to assist with identifying and transferring excess vaccines to sites that are able to use them.

If you are unable to relocate excess doses locally, please contact the Vaccine Operations Centre (VOC) during the VOC operation hours or emailing covid19vaccineoperationscentre@health.gov.au for assistance.

Importantly:

- In some instances the VOC may be able to arrange collection of excess doses for redistribution to another site.
- Proposed collection orders will be assessed for suitability, taking into consideration shelf life, time in transit, and clinic location.
- Pharmacies will need to provide the VOC with details about excess stock, including batch number, expiry date and number of excess doses, to be considered as part of this assessment.

Once assessed, you will be contacted only if the VOC is able to assist with collection.

Please dispose of all expired vaccines and report in CVAS as normal.

When assessing the suitability of stock for collection, please note that the VOC can only accept:

- 20 vials or more of Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca)
- 10 vials or more of Comirnaty (Pfizer)
- 10 vials or more of Spikevax (Moderna).

VOC Opening Hours, Orders and Deliveries during the Holiday Period

The Vaccine Operations Centre operating hours will reduce to **7am to 9pm (AEDT) from Saturday 18 December 2021 to Sunday 30 January 2022**. Enquiries can still be made to the VOC during these reduced hours on 1800 318 208 or emailing covid19vaccineoperationscentre@health.gov.au

There are different **ordering and delivery arrangements over the holiday period**.

Key ordering and delivery dates for **Pfizer (12 and over), AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccine**:

End of ordering cycle placed in CVAS	Requested Delivery Date (RDD)
17 December 2021	7 January 2022
24 December 2021	7 January 2022
31 December 2021	14 January 2022
7 January 2022	21 January 2022

No orders will be delivered between Friday 24 December 2021 and Tuesday 4 January (inclusive).

VCF Update

Following the recent advice from ATAGI on children aged 5 to 11 years:

- the Vaccine Clinic Finder (VCF) has **created a separate button to help parents or carers find clinics that are administering the Pfizer (5 to 11 years) vaccine;** and
- an alert notice for consumers that clinics may have different opening hours over the holiday period.

Importantly:

- From **mid-late December**, all sites that have placed vaccine orders will begin to appear on the VCF to help parents or carers of children 5 to 11 years of age to find clinics administering the vaccine.
- **Initially, clinics and pharmacies will be listed as phone only** as we work with Healthdirect Australia and your booking providers to get the booking links live on the VCF. Please be patient as we make these changes.

Kind regards,

Pharmacy Programs Administrator