

25 March 2022- ATAGI advice on Winter Dose | ATAGI Booster Advice | Co-administration of COVID and Flu vaccines | In-Reach Services by Pharmacies| 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 advice on Winter Dose
- ATAGI Booster Advice
- Co-administration of COVID and Flu vaccines
- In-Reach Services by Pharmacies
- VCF Update.

ATAGI advice on Winter Dose

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [recommends an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine for winter for selected population groups](#) who are at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and who have received their primary vaccination and first booster dose.

These groups include:

- 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 the 11th February 2022 [ATAGI statement](#) on the use of a 3rd primary dose of COVID-19 vaccine in individuals who are severely immunocompromised)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and older.

Resource:

- Refer to the Summary [Poster](#) about the *ATAGI recommended doses and vaccine*.
- The poster is a valuable resource to identify appropriate COVID vaccine by eligible groups, including age cohort.

The Australian Government has accepted this advice and will include the winter dose for recommended people in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program **from 4 April 2022**.

The additional winter COVID-19 vaccine dose **can be:**

- given **from 4 months or longer** after receipt of a previous booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine; OR/
- given **from 4 months after a confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection** if this has occurred since the previous booster.

In special circumstances **individuals may be able to receive their winter dose at a shorter interval**, for example, in vaccination in-reach programs to aged care, disability care or remote communities, where some flexibility of the minimum interval may help vaccinate a larger proportion of individuals.

Importantly:

- The winter COVID-19 dose can be **co-administered with influenza vaccine**. However, it is **important not to delay the influenza vaccine** if an individual is not yet eligible for a second booster COVID-19 vaccine dose.
- Comirnaty (Pfizer) for 16 years and older, or Spikevax (Moderna) for 18 years and older are the preferred vaccines for this winter dose.
- Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) can be used when an mRNA vaccine is contraindicated or a patient declines vaccination with an mRNA vaccine.
- Nuvaxovid (Novavax) can be used as a booster if no other COVID-19 vaccine is considered suitable for that individual.

Payments for the winter dose will remain the same as for the administration of other booster doses.

ATAGI Booster Advice

ATAGI continues to recommend:

- **All individuals aged 16 and older to receive a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine, 3 months following completion of their primary course.** For most individuals this will be a third dose. This booster dose is important for protecting them against COVID-19.

- For any person aged 16 and older who has not received their first booster yet, ATAGI recommends they receive it as soon as possible, 3 months following completion of their primary course.

Important reminder:

- Pfizer 12yo+ (Purple) is to be administered for **16 years and older**
- Moderna is to be administered for **18 years and older**.

Protection against infection wanes after the first booster dose. However, protection against severe disease (rather than all infection) is relatively well maintained, especially in young healthy populations.

Co-administration of COVID and Flu vaccines

A COVID-19 vaccination and an influenza vaccination **can be administered at the same time** and may be provided to patients during the same attendance.

Importantly:

- Pharmacies must adhere to their jurisdictional legislation about the administration of influenza vaccinations.
- The CVCP Program Rules only apply for COVID vaccinations and not influenza vaccinations.
- Therefore, pharmacies cannot claim fees for administering influenza vaccinations through the CVCP Program, including through the PPA Claim Portal.

In-Reach Services by Pharmacies

Pharmacies are encouraged to continue to support their local Residential Aged Care Facilities and Disability Support Services in providing eligible people to receive their winter dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Reminder of off-site provisions and incentive fees:

- **Site visit payments** (flag fall) of \$57.25 for pharmacies who visit vulnerable patients to administer COVID-19 vaccinations.



- **Residential Care Incentive payment** to vaccinate residents at residential aged care and residential disability care facilities.

Further details about these payments are outlined in the CVCP Program Rules.

VCF Update

Updates to the Vaccine Clinic Finder will be released from Friday 25 March 2022 to align with ATAGI advice about winter doses.

Kind regards,

Pharmacy Programs Administrator