

7 July 2022- ATAGI Update - Recommendations for a Winter Dose of COVID-19 Vaccine

Dear Pharmacy,

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

- ATAGI Update - recommendations for a winter dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

ATAGI updated recommendations for a winter dose of COVID-19 vaccine

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has [updated its recommendations](#) for a winter dose of COVID-19 vaccine to help reduce severe disease from the emerging surge of Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 subvariant infections, and to reduce the burden on Australian hospitals and the healthcare system in coming months.

The updated recommendations are:

- **Adults aged 50 to 64 years are now recommended to receive a winter booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine**
- Adults aged 30 to 49 years can elect to receive a winter booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, however the benefit for people in this age group is less certain
- The interval recommended between the first booster dose (or recent COVID-19 infection) and a winter booster dose is now **3 months**.

ATAGI emphasises that people previously eligible for a winter booster dose remain at higher risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19 and should receive a [winter booster dose](#) as soon as possible. They include:

- All adults aged 65 years or older
- Residents of aged care or disability care facilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years or older
- People who are [severely immunocompromised](#) (this will be their 5th dose)
- People aged 16 years or older with a [medical condition](#) that increases the risk of severe COVID-19 illness
- People aged 16 years or older with disability, significant or complex health needs, or multiple comorbidities which increase the risk of a poor outcome.

ATAGI emphasises that individuals who have previously been infected with SARS-CoV-2, irrespective of which variant it may have been, should still continue to receive recommended vaccine doses, after an interval of **3 months**, as prior infection alone will not provide sufficient protection against severe disease.

The Australian Government has **accepted** this advice and will include the winter dose for these population groups in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program from **11 July 2022**.

All primary care vaccination sites may commence administering the winter doses to the additional population immediately if they have appointments available.

If sites identify a need for additional stock, please contact the Vaccine Operations Centre (VOC) on 1800 318 208.

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

Kind regards,

Pharmacy Programs Administrator