

03 August 2022- ATAGI Update - COVID-19 Vaccination for children aged 6 months to under 5 years | Community Pharmacy - COVID-19 Vaccinations for children aged 6 months to under 5 years | Reminders

Dear Service Provider,

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

- ATAGI Update - COVID-19 Vaccinations for Children Aged 6 Months to Under 5 Years
- Community Pharmacy - COVID-19 Vaccinations for Children Aged 6 Months to Under 5 Years
- Reminders.

ATAGI UPDATE - COVID-19 Vaccinations for Children Aged 6 Months to Under 5 Years

- Following the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) approval of the Spikevax (Moderna) vaccine for children aged 6 months to 5 years, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has provided recommendations on the use of Moderna in children aged 6 months to under 5 years in certain **at risk population groups**.
 - ATAGI [recommends](#) COVID-19 vaccination for **children aged 6 months to under 5 years** with severe immunocompromise, disability, and those who have complex and/or multiple health conditions which increase the risk of severe COVID-19.
 - The recommendation is for 2 primary doses, except for those children with severe immunocompromise who will require 3 primary doses. The recommended interval between each dose is 8 weeks.
 - At this stage, ATAGI **does not recommend** vaccination for children aged 6 months to under 5 years who are **not** in the risk categories for severe COVID-19. These children have a very low likelihood of severe illness from COVID-19.
- The Australian Government has **accepted** this advice and will include the Moderna vaccine for **children aged 6 months to under 5 years** in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program from **5 September 2022**.

Community Pharmacy - COVID-19 Vaccinations for Children Aged 6 Months to Under 5 Years

- As advised previously, Community Pharmacy will not be involved in the initial rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations to children aged 6 months to under 5 years.

- This is a reflection on the limited scope of the initial rollout to this cohort (i.e. children with severe immunocompromise, disability, and those who have complex and/or multiple health conditions which increase the risk of severe COVID-19).
- Consideration may be given to future Community Pharmacy involvement, as the rollout for this cohort continues.
- **No COVID-19 vaccinations should be administered to children aged 6 months to under 5 years by Community Pharmacy at this stage.**
- The Australian Government is thankful for the ongoing and critical contribution Community Pharmacy has made to the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout.

Reminders

Tips to avoid administering more booster doses than recommended:

- There have been a number of Vaccine Administration Errors (VAEs) where an additional off label dose has been administered to non-immunocompromised patient(s) who had already received a total of 4 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine (two primary course doses, a first booster and a 4th dose).
- It is the responsibility of the vaccine provider to remain up to date with the current recommendations.
- This information can be found on the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [Clinical recommendations for COVID-19 vaccines](#) webpage.
- Prior to administering you should:
 1. Check Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) before administering every COVID-19 vaccine
 2. Check if it's the correct vaccine for the individual patient cohort
 3. Check if the dose interval is correct
 4. Check if it's for the right age group
 5. A detailed conversation is needed between patient and vaccinator to confirm the patient's eligibility and number of doses required for the individual situation.
- The following resource posters may assist, available via the COVID-19 vaccine training website:
 - [Don't forget to check poster](#)
 - [Children checklist poster.](#)

Kind regards,
Pharmacy Programs Administrator