

15 November 2022 - ATAGI Update - Booster Doses | ATAGI Update - COVID-19 Pfizer Bivalent Vaccine | Moderna Bivalent (Blue/Green) Allocation Increase | Christmas Arrangements

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 Update - No Change to Booster Dose Advice
- ATAGI Update - COVID-19 Pfizer Bivalent Vaccine
- Moderna Bivalent (**Blue/Green**) Allocation Increase
- Christmas Arrangements.

ATAGI Update - No Change to Booster Dose Advice

- The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has reviewed its booster dose advice (November 2022) for COVID-19 vaccines in the context of increasing case numbers in Australia and the emergence of the XBB and BQ.1 Omicron subvariants. ATAGI wishes to [provide the following updates](#):
 - ATAGI has made **no new recommendations at this time**, including **no changes to the number of COVID-19 vaccine booster doses** recommended.
 - ATAGI emphasises the importance of remaining up to date with [recommended doses](#) of COVID-19 vaccines, especially for people aged 65 years and older and [those at higher risk](#) of severe COVID-19.

ATAGI Update - COVID-19 Pfizer Bivalent Vaccine

- Following the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) granting [provisional registration](#) for the Pfizer (Comirnaty) Bivalent Original/Omicron BA.1 (subsequently referred to as Pfizer bivalent) vaccine for use as a booster dose in people aged 18 years and older, ATAGI has provided the following [recommendations](#):
 - The Pfizer bivalent vaccine can be used as an alternative vaccine for **any booster dose in people aged 18 years or older**, according to the current [ATAGI recommendations for booster doses](#).
 - The booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine should be given at least 3 months after a person's most recent COVID-19 vaccine dose or previous COVID-19 infection.



- Co-administration of Pfizer bivalent vaccine with other non-COVID vaccines is acceptable, as per current [ATAGI clinical guidance](#).
- The Pfizer bivalent vaccine is **not recommended** for primary course of vaccination (first two doses in most people or first three doses in severely immunocompromised people).
- ATAGI does not currently recommend use of the Pfizer bivalent vaccine as a booster in anyone under 18 years as it is not registered for this age group.
- The Australian Government has **accepted** advice from ATAGI and will include the Pfizer bivalent (**Grey**) in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program for boosters in people aged 18 years or older from **12 December 2022**.
- All sites currently participating in the COVID Vaccine Program will be onboarded for **Pfizer bivalent (Grey)** across two tranches, with the ordering window for the first tranche opening on Saturday 19 November 2022.
- Onboarding letters will be issued shortly to participating sites.

Moderna Bivalent (**Blue/Green**) Allocation Increase

- For sites administering Moderna Bivalent (**Blue/Green**) your allocation will be increased to 200 doses per fortnight from **19 November 2022**.
- If you have a need for additional vaccines, you can place an additional order in CVAS or contact the Vaccine Operations Centre (VOC) on 1800 318 208 or by emailing COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@health.gov.au.

Christmas Arrangements

Ordering

- With Christmas and the New Year fast approaching, pharmacies are encouraged to commence planning for the number of vaccines needed from **mid-to-late December 2022** to **mid-January 2023**. When ordering, please consider the additional stock needed to meet demand over the holiday period.

Reporting a Cold Chain Breach (CCB), Vaccine Administration Error (VAE) or making a Clinical Enquiry over the Christmas Period

- The VOC will be closed between 3pm Friday 23 December 2022 and Monday 2 January 2023 inclusive.
- During this time, you will be **unable** to phone the VOC to report a Cold Chain Breach, Vaccine Administration Error, or to make a clinical enquiry. Instead, the VOC should be emailed at COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@health.gov.au, and



detailed instructions containing further information required for reporting will be made available.

- **If you need to report a Cold Chain Breach (CCB) incident** that has occurred, please isolate and store affected vaccines within appropriate cold chain requirements until the case has been assessed and you have been provided with advice once the VOC reopens on 3 January 2023. Vaccines should be clearly labelled with '**DO NOT USE, DO NOT DISCARD**'.
- If your site requires additional vaccines during this time, you may consider contacting a nearby COVID-19 vaccine provider and arrange for the transfer of excess doses. Please ensure correct cold chain practices are adhered to when transporting vaccines between sites. For further information on appropriate cold chain requirements, including advice on managing vaccines in a power failure and transporting vaccines between sites, please refer to the [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5'](#).
- **If you need to report a Vaccine Administration Error (VAE) or make a Clinical Enquiry**, you can email the VOC at COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@health.gov.au, and your case will be assessed, and clinical advice will be provided during VOC operating hours.
- You may choose to refer to the [ATAGI clinical guidance on COVID-19 vaccine administration errors](#) document for advice on the management of a range of possible VAEs, including when a replacement (repeat) dose is recommended.
- If you require urgent information about COVID-19 vaccines, the latest clinical guidelines can be found on the Department of Health and Aged Care [ATAGI clinical guidance for COVID-19 vaccine providers](#) webpage, or you can call the Coronavirus helpline on 1800 020 080 (open 24 hours, 7 days a week).

Kind regards,

Pharmacy Programs Administrator