



COVID-19 VACCINATION

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

Key Messages

XBB.1.5 COVID-19 VACCINES

Ordering

The following XBB.1.5 COVID-19 vaccines are to be included in the COVID-19 Vaccine program **from 11 December 2023**:

- Moderna (XBB.1.5) 12 Years + (PFS) vaccine
- Pfizer (XBB.1.5) 12 years + (Grey) vaccine
- Pfizer (XBB.1.5) 5 -11 years (Light Blue) vaccine

Sites participating in the Program have been onboarded for these vaccines in two tranches. The tranches were based on sites' current fortnightly ordering windows. This was to ensure equitable distribution of the vaccine. In the coming weeks, all sites will have access to order the XBB.1.5 vaccines via the CVAS ordering tab.

Note that additional orders for XBB vaccines will not be approved until after sites in both Tranches have had a chance to order.

Linked to this Bulletin are Factsheets containing some additional information about each of the XBB.1.5 vaccines.

Australian Immunisation Handbook – XBB Update

The **Australian Immunisation Handbook** (the Handbook) was updated on 27 November 2023 to include recommendations on use of XBB 1.5 COVID-19 vaccines. Providers can find guidance on patient eligibility, suitability, dosage and administration for all available COVID-19 vaccines in the Handbook [here](#).

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation's clinical advice regarding the administration of COVID-19 vaccines recently transitioned to the Handbook. This move aligns COVID-19 vaccination with the standard process for other vaccines available in Australia. All future COVID-19 vaccine updates, including recommendations for new vaccine types, will be published in the Handbook.

It is the responsibility of vaccine providers to ensure they are complying with the most current clinical recommendations.

MODERNA SUPPLY

Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 12 years + PFS

The Commonwealth supply of the Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 12 years + PFS vaccine is close to expiry, and you are **no longer able to order** this vaccine product.

Sites who have ordered this vaccine with a Requested Delivery Date of 8 December 2023, are **reminded** that these doses **expire on Wednesday 20 December 2023 at the latest**.

After this time, please **do not administer** the vaccine and discard any remaining stock, ensuring that it is **reported as wastage in CVAS**.

Alternative Vaccines

There are a range of mRNA vaccines that continue to be available for people aged 12 years and over. These include:

- Moderna (XBB.1.5) 12 Years + (PFS) vaccine
- Pfizer (XBB.1.5) 12 years + (Grey) vaccine

Novavax can also be used for those patients who are unable or prefer not to have mRNA vaccines.

SERVICE FINDER UPDATE

From 13 December 2023, consumers can book a COVID-19 vaccination service through Service Finder without the need to select a vaccine brand.

Reducing the options from vaccine brand to a single service type creates a viable and sustainable approach to helping consumers find and book a COVID-19 vaccination appointment that suits their needs.

Consumers will be advised to contact their preferred vaccine provider or ask for advice on the best COVID-19 vaccine for their circumstances at the appointment.

REMINDERS

Opportunistic vaccination

With the Holiday season fast approaching, having vaccines on hand provides you with the opportunity to vaccinate patients when the opportunity arises. This includes travellers outside of their regions during the Holiday period.

Sites are encouraged to utilise all opportunities to vaccinate eligible patients, if you do have someone who is eligible and requires a COVID-19 vaccine, **do not delay, open a vial and vaccinate them**.

We understand that wastage of vaccine is an inevitable part of the program as we move to a more opportunistic model of vaccination and advise that there are **no penalties for sites should wastage occur**.

Vaccine wastage is required to be recorded via weekly stock management reports.

End of Year Arrangements

Please **be reminded** that the VOC will be **closed from 3pm Friday 22 December 2023** to Monday 1 January 2024 inclusive.

The **last regular ordering** window for vaccines will close **8 December 2023** for delivery on or before **Thursday 21 December 2023**. There will be **no scheduled deliveries** from the period Friday 22 December 2023 to Monday 8 January 2024 inclusive.

From Tuesday 2 January 2024, VOC regular operating hours will resume.

The [VOC End of Year arrangements flyer](#) contains useful information to assist sites with ordering, delivery windows and clinical information during this period.

If you have any questions regarding the shutdown, please call the VOC on 1800 318 208 or email COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@Health.gov.au

Stock on Hand Reporting

As a requirement for participating in the COVID-19 vaccination program, all sites **are required to complete** Delivery Acceptance, Stock Management Reporting and report all vaccine wastage in COVID-19 Vaccine Administrative System (CVAS). The [CVAS Reporting Guide for Sites](#) assists in completing these reports.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

It is mandatory under the [Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015](#), for vaccination providers to report all vaccinations administered in Australia to the AIR. The [COVID-19 Australian Immunisation Register Fact Sheet](#) and [Air Codes Table](#) provides additional information about your responsibilities as a vaccination provider administering COVID-19 vaccines.

In reach vaccinations for At Risk Cohorts

Primary care providers are delivering the majority of COVID-19 vaccinations in residential aged care and to other at-risk populations.

We appreciate the continuing hard work of sites in ensuring that those who wish to receive a COVID-19 dose can, in particular, the recent in-reach support undertaken in local Residential Aged Care Homes (RACH), Disability Support Services and for at-risk populations.

We seek your assistance to continue your invaluable support, **to ensure that residents in RACHs and disability homes and at-risk populations have received a COVID-19 2023 Booster Dose or where eligible an additional dose.** Please continue to work with local RACHs and Disability homes and reach out to offer assistance with vaccinations where you are able.

The [aged care communication toolkit](#) contains information and materials to help you communicate about COVID-19 vaccine doses to older people, their families and carers.

RESOURCES

- [FACTSHEET - Moderna \(XBB.1.5\) 12 years+ \(PFS\) - NOV 2023](#)
- [FACTSHEET - Pfizer \(XBB.1.5\) 5-11 years \(Light Blue\) - NOV 2023](#)
- [FACTSHEET - Pfizer \(XBB.1.5\) 12 years+ \(Grey\) - NOV 2023](#)
- [Provider Bulletin Flyer – VOC End of Year Arrangements and useful information – Dec 2023](#)
- [CVAS Reporting Guide for Sites – September 2023](#)
- [COVID-19 Australian Immunisation Register Fact Sheet](#)
- [COVID-19 AIR Codes Poster](#)
- [Aged care communication toolkit](#)