



Final 2023 Pharmacy Bulletin

20 December 2023

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

Now available

On 20 November 2023, the Australian Government included the Monovalent Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccines in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program for administration from 11 December 2023.

All currently available COVID-19 vaccines are anticipated to provide benefit to eligible people, however the monovalent Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccines are preferred over other vaccines.

The monovalent Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccines can be used in children aged 5 years or older and adults who are currently recommended both primary or additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine, according to the Australian Immunisation Handbook

To minimise the risk of Vaccine Administration Errors, providers should preferably prepare and store doses of the XBB.1.5 vaccines separately, noting all three vaccines have different formulations. Doses withdrawn in advance of administration should be clearly labelled.

Participating sites were automatically onboarded for the XBB.1.5 vaccines. If your site was not onboarded for the XBB.1.5 vaccines you can request them in the Vaccine Access Request tab in the COVID-19 Vaccination Administrative System (CVAS).

MODERNA

Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 12 years + PFS

The Commonwealth supply of the Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 12 years + PFS vaccine **expires today**. Sites who ordered this vaccine with a Requested Delivery Date of 8 December 2023, are **reminded** that these doses **expire today, 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

Pfizer Bivalent (BA.4/5) 12 Years + (Grey) vaccine

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

NOVAVAX SUPPLY

Novavax ceased manufacturing their ancestral COVID-19 vaccine formulation (**Novavax**) vaccine in early 2022. The Commonwealth's supply is close to expiry. Soon you will no longer be able to order or administer this vaccine product.

The last ordering window will open in CVAS on **Saturday, 30 December 2023**.

Ordering

Activity	Date
Last order window opens	Saturday 30 December 2023
Last order window closes	11:59pm Friday 5 January 2024
Last Requested Delivery Date	Friday 19 January 2024
Last doses expire	Wednesday 31 January 2024

Administrations

Sites receiving Novavax with a Requested Delivery Date of 19 January 2024 are reminded that you will have a **minimum of 12 days** to use the vaccine until its expiry on **31 January 2024**.

The new Novavax XBB.1.5 formulation (Nuvaxovid) is currently under regulatory review and is expected to be available in time for the 2024 autumn respiratory season.

Eligible patients have had sufficient time to access Novavax since its introduction into the Program. There are a range of mRNA vaccines that continue to be available for people aged 12 years and over.

Sites are encouraged to reach out to any patients who are unable to have mRNA vaccines and have not received their recommended COVID vaccinations before **31 January 2024**.

REMINDERS

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](#).

Service Finder Update

On 13 December 2023, the updated Service Finder went **live** and consumers can now book a COVID-19 vaccination service through Service Finder without the need to select a vaccine brand.

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.

Opportunistic vaccination over 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.**

REMINDER: Before administering any COVID-19 vaccine, please ensure you **check the expiry date.** See the '**Don't Forget to Check Poster**' for more information!

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** until 8.30am Tuesday 2 January 2024.

The **last regular ordering** window for vaccines has now closed 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.

The VOC will resume regular operating hours from Tuesday 2 January 2024.

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

RESOURCES

- [Don't Forget to Check Poster](#)
- [Recommended COVID-19 Vaccine doses Dec 2023](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Comparison Poster Dec 2023](#)

Happy Holidays



**We look forward to working
with you in 2024**