

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Safe. Effective. Free.

Prioritising Residential Aged Care

INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES, REPRESENTATIVES AND CARERS

3 February 2021

Update on Australia's COVID-19 vaccines

The Australian Government has a strategy to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to everyone living in Australia. The [vaccine roll-out roadmap](#) outlines the staged roll-out of the vaccine to priority groups, which is expected to commence from late-February 2021.

A COVID-19 vaccine is just one part of keeping the community safe and healthy. It is important for everyone to continue COVIDSafe practises such hand hygiene, physical distancing and wearing masks when required, particularly in residential aged care facilities (RACFs).

Residential aged care workers and residents will be among the first people who can choose to receive the vaccine in the first roll-out phase (Phase 1a).

More information is outlined in the [Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) and the [COVID-19 Vaccines National Roll-Out Strategy](#).



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Vaccine safety and effectiveness

The Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) rigorous assessment process of potential COVID-19 vaccines will ensure approved vaccines are safe and effective.

All vaccines are thoroughly tested for safety before they are approved for use in Australia. This includes careful analysis of clinical trial data, ingredients, chemistry, manufacturing and other factors.

The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine has been provisionally approved by the TGA for people 16 years and older. The approval is subject to strict conditions and Pfizer will be required to continue providing information to the TGA on the safety, efficacy and quality of the vaccine. More information on this approval is available on the [Department of Health's website](#).

Provisional approval of the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is currently anticipated in February, subject to approval by the TGA.

You can talk to your GP or a health professional about the COVID-19 vaccines and why vaccination is an important part of keeping the community safe and healthy.

COVID-19 vaccination for frail elderly people over 85 years of age

Specific advice for frail elderly people on receiving the COVID-19 vaccine will be provided by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

The TGA have advised the potential benefits of vaccination versus the potential risk and clinical impact of even relatively mild systemic adverse events in the frail elderly should be carefully assessed on a case-by-case basis. Patients and/or their families, representatives and carers can talk to their GP or a health professional about the COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccination is voluntary, but strongly encouraged

COVID-19 vaccines will be safe, free and voluntary for everyone living in Australia.

The Australian Government and Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) strongly encourages everyone to get vaccinated.

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How the vaccine will be administered to residents

The Australian Government is responsible for leading the implementation of the COVID-19 Vaccination Program for the large majority of RACFs in consultation with state and territory governments. However, NSW, SA and VIC state governments will have responsibility for leading the vaccine roll out to their state run RACFs.

Workers and residents in residential aged care facilities will be able to receive their vaccination in their RACF. Information will be provided to you ahead of vaccinators attending your facility. Additional skilled immunisation teams, separate to the RACF workers, will work in partnership with facilities and be appropriately trained to administer the vaccine to workers and residents in their facility.

NSW, SA and VIC state governments will provide further information on the administration of COVID-19 vaccines to residents and workers in their state run RACFs.

More information will be provided to residents and their family, representatives and carers in the coming weeks.

COVID-19 vaccines and the annual influenza vaccine

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) agrees that all available steps should be taken to maximise influenza vaccine coverage amongst the aged care workforce, residents and their carers.

Advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is that the preferred minimum interval between administration of either the Pfizer/BioNTech or the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines and any influenza vaccine is 14 days. This is the current precautionary advice.

Obtaining consent and arranging immunisations

Appropriate consent will be obtained prior to vaccination. More information will be provided on consent for residents in RACFs and their family, representatives and carers soon.

Keep up to date with trusted information

The Department of Health will continue to provide updates.

You can find information, including translated information, on the Department of Health's [COVID-19 vaccines website](#). You can also subscribe to receive the [COVID-19 Vaccines Update](#).

You can also call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080, and ask for an interpreter if needed.

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Where can I find out more information?

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You can also get regular updates via the Department of Health's social media channels on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube.

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