COVID-19 VACCINATION

Updated 3 June 2022

Transfer of COVID-19 vaccines between participating primary care vaccination sites

Primary care COVID-19 vaccination sites (including general practices, Commonwealth Vaccination Clinics (CVCs), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and community pharmacies), may choose to transfer COVID-19 vaccines from one participating vaccination site to another for a range of reasons, including:

- to support unmet demand at another site,
- an oversupply of vaccine stock on hand,
- moving stock nearing expiration to a high-throughput site for use, or
- transferring unused stock following withdrawal from the COVID-19 Vaccination Program (Program).

Transporting between sites is supported, provided both sites are enabled for the same vaccine type, agree to the transfer, and vaccine cold chain integrity is maintained during transportation. The National COVID Vaccine Taskforce cannot, in most cases, facilitate transportation of the vaccine between locations, but does need to be informed to track doses

Primary Health Networks (PHNs), ACCHS Sector Support Organisations (SSO) and the Vaccine Operations Centre (VOC) are available to provide support as needed, including identifying sites who may want an increase in supply.

Who can receive transferred stock?

COVID-19 vaccine stock can only be transferred between **participating** COVID-19 vaccination sites. Stock cannot be transferred to a site that is not registered with the Program.

Vaccination sites planning to transfer stock are encouraged to contact their support organisations to discuss:.

- General practices and CVCs should contact their local PHN.
- ACCHS should contact their PHN or SSO.
- Community pharmacies should contact the VOC.

All sites must be enabled for the transferred vaccine type and have completed the relevant site declaration in the COVID-19 Vaccine Administrative System (CVAS) before receiving stock.

Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca), Comirnaty (Pfizer) 5-11 years, Comirnaty (Pfizer) 12+ years, Spikevax (Moderna), **Nuvaxovid (Novavax)** doses can be transferred between general practices, CVCs, ACCHS, community pharmacies and state and territory clinics.

Please note transfers do not change ongoing allocations of COVID-19 vaccines, they are only supplied as **excess doses**.

Does the Commonwealth need to approve each transfer?

No. The Commonwealth does not need to approve the transfer of vaccines between participating sites. The Commonwealth does need to be informed of the transfer through the *Vaccine Stock Management Report* via CVAS (by both the receiving and transferring sites). This includes stock received from states and territories.

Is there a limit for how much stock can be transferred?

You can transfer any full, unopened vials you have on hand, , and the receiving site must agree and accept the amount. A plan for ensuring the availability of stock for second doses should be considered.

How do sites record the vaccine transfer?

Both transferring and receiving vaccination sites need to record the transfer of vaccines within their *Vaccine Stock Management Report* via CVAS by 9pm Friday on the week of the transfer. This includes additional stock that may have been received from the state or territory government.

The *Vaccine Stock Management Report* must be completed each week, by 9pm local time Friday, even if you are not transferring or receiving stock.

How should the COVID-19 vaccine be transported?

Both parties (transferring site and receiving site) should agree to the transportation arrangements, including transportation of consumables (such as syringes, needles and sharps collectors) to be sent with the vaccine.

Sites should refer to ***The National Vaccine Storage Guidelines*** (Strive for 5) for information and advice on vaccine storage, including during transportation. Sites should ensure all appropriate requirements for transport are met, including:

- maintaining and monitoring transportation temperature,
- sharing of relevant cold chain history,
- vaccines do not exceed approved time in motion requirements, and
- ensuring that all people involved in vaccine transport have appropriate training and expertise to ensure that vaccines remain potent.,

Only unopened vials should be transferred between sites.

If you are receiving **excess doses of Pfizer or Moderna** please take note of the thaw use by date and book appointments for administration of the doses accordingly.

What if I am withdrawing from the COVID-19 Vaccination Program?

Providers who withdraw from the Program are encouraged to administer all their vaccine stock where possible. If sites have unused doses that they cannot administer, the PHN, SSO or the VOC can assist to identify an alternate vaccination site for stock to be transported to.

Once transported, the withdrawing site should fill out their final *Vaccine Stock Management Report*. Future allocations for the withdrawn site will return to the vaccine stockpile for redistribution to other sites.

What if vaccine wastage occurs while the vaccines are being transported, or it expires before it is transferred?

Sites should take all reasonable precautions to minimise vaccine wastage.

All wastage must be reported, and vaccine stock should be disposed of.appropriatly. Guidance on appropriate disposal of COVID-19 vaccines can be found in the relevant COVID-19 Vaccine Training Module.

Wastage of 10 or more vials must be reported immediately in CVAS via a *Vaccine Wastage Report*.

Wastage under 10 vials should be captured in the weekly *Vaccine Stock Management Report* in CVAS.

What if I can't identify a site to transfer excess stock to?

In the first instance, we encourage all sites to reach out to their local networks to help identify sites that can use excess vaccines.

If you are unable to relocate excess doses locally, contact the VOC on 1800 318 208 during their opening hours, or email covid19vaccineoperationscentre@health.gov.au outside of hours for assistance.

In some instances, the VOC may be able to arrange collection and redistribution of excess doses. Proposed collection orders will be assessed for suitability, taking into consideration shelf life, time in transit, and clinic location. You will need to provide the VOC with details about your excess stock including:

- the number of excess vials you have in stock (only vials that have not already been allocated, such as those for upcoming appointments should be identified as excess),
- the expiry date (e.g. are there more than 28 days expiry remaining or less than 28 days expiry remaining (4 weeks)?);,
- the number of whole, sealed, unopened boxes available,
- the batch number (unopened boxes only) and the number of boxes in the batch;
- the fridge data or logs to verify cold chain was maintained, and
- primary contact details to arrange collection.

When assessing the suitability of stock for collection, please note that the VOC can only accept:

- 20 vials or more of AstraZeneca;
- 10 or more vials of mRNA vaccines (Pfizer or Moderna)
- 10 or more vials of Novavax.

Once assessed, you will be contacted if the VOC is able to assist with collection.