COVID-19 vaccines

Newsletter – 2 March 2021

Information for COVID-19 vaccine providers

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Contents

This is a weekly newsletter for COVID-19 vaccine providers with new or updated information highlighted in yellow.

Latest updates

- Implementation of the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccination program started in Victoria on 22 February 2021. Read more about the program that is underway <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/free-coronavirus-vaccines-underway-victoria>.

- Bendigo and Ballarat hospital vaccination hubs opened this week. Read more about the ramp up of the program <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/vaccine-rollout-continues-ramp-across-victoria>.

- This program commences with the priority groups in phase 1a of the national vaccine rollout. Read more about the national prioritisation process <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/who-will-get-the-vaccines>.

- There is significant demand for COVID-19 vaccines to help end the COVID-19 pandemic and this means initial doses available must be allocated to priority groups at greatest risk of COVID-19 infection and serious illness.

- Doses of COVID-19 vaccine are currently limited but as more doses become available, more people will be vaccinated. The Australian Government has established phases of vaccine rollout that are based on ages and other risk factors including existing medical conditions.

- People who are in the priority groups in phase 1a will receive an invitation to register for their COVID-19 vaccination. All people in phase 1a are our priority, and you will be vaccinated in due course – thank you for being patient as we get into a steady rhythm rolling out vaccines safely and effectively.
- The new Victorian COVID-19 Vaccine Control Centre (VVCC) was established on 22 February 2021 in parallel with an Alert Advisory Group to monitor the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines. This is a collaboration between the Australian and Victorian Governments and our partners.
- The VVCC is a central coordination point for vaccination hubs, Australian Government Vaccine Operations Centre, the Victorian Department of Health and Surveillance of Adverse Events Following Vaccination in the Community (SAEFVIC) to ensure rapid respond to any events in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout.
- People who have received the COVID-19 vaccine are encouraged to report any possible adverse reactions following vaccination by responding to the SMS they receive after the vaccine or by contacting the Victorian SAEFVIC Line <https://www.aefican.org.au/Home/Info/VIC>.
- As with all vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccines will be continuously monitored for safety by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) – who oversee the safety of vaccines across Australia.
- For general enquiries call the Coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398 24 hours, open seven days a week and select option 3 for COVID-19 vaccines.
- Victorian healthcare and aged and disability care workers are invited to take part in the COVID Vaccine Preparedness study <https://redcap.mcri.edu.au/surveys/?s=LKHLCFCKDD> led by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.
- During the vaccine roll out it is critical that we all continue to be COVIDSafe <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covidsafe-summer>.

Latest resources available

The Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccine website is being regularly updated. Find the latest information for COVID-19 vaccination providers <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/information-for-covid-19-vaccination-providers>.

Factsheets have been translated into 63 languages <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-information-in-your-language>:

- Consent form for COVID-19 vaccine
- Information on COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine
- Preparing for COVID-19 vaccine
- After your COVID-19 vaccine
- What to expect on COVID-19 vaccination day at your aged care residence.

For more resources head to the More information and resources section of this newsletter.

Healthcare worker wellbeing

As part of the Victorian Government healthcare worker wellbeing package, Safer Care Victoria has launched the Healthcare worker wellbeing centre. Subscribe for updates <http://eepurl.com/hn5jcL> or join the Healthcare worker wellbeing centre advisory group <https://www.bettersafercare.vic.gov.au/news-and-media/join-the-healthcare-worker-wellbeing-centre-advisory-group>.

A list of supports currently available for healthcare workers <https://www.bettersafercare.vic.gov.au/support-and-training/hcw-wellbeing/for-healthcare-workers>.

Delivery of COVID-19 vaccines

Priority groups

Australia's COVID-19 vaccines will be available in phases, as defined by the Australian Government's schedule <https:/www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/who-will-get-the-vaccines>, with groups prioritised based on expert medical and public health advice.

Vaccine hubs

Victorians at greatest risk of COVID-19 will initially be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at Victorian public hospital vaccination hubs. The first Pfizer immunisations started on 22 February 2021, at Austin Health, Barwon Health, Monash Health (in partnership with Alfred Health) and Western Health.

Read more about how the vaccines will be distributed <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/how-covid-19-vaccines-will-be-distributed>.

The Australian Government has stated that general practices will be prioritised for participation during the early stages of the phase 1b rollout, based on capacity, readiness and geographical spread. The Victorian Department of Health (the department) is committed to working with the Australian Government and Victorian general practices in this important work and awaits further details on the location of initial practices that will participate and the anticipated vaccinations they will be able to deliver.

Equitable and easy access to COVID-19 vaccines will be essential, and the Department recognises the important role general practitioners will play in protecting their local communities through their participation in the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccination program.

Vaccination consent and patient resources

- Immunisation provider guide to obtaining informed consent for COVID-19 vaccine <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-atagi-immunisation-provider-guide-to-obtaining-informed-consent-for-covid-19-vaccine>
- Consent form for COVID-19 vaccination <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-consent-form-for-covid-19-vaccination>
- Patient resource – Information on Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, COMIRNATY <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-information-on-covid-19-pfizer-comirnaty-vaccine>
- Patient resource – Preparing for COVID-19 vaccination <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-preparing-for-covid-19-vaccination>
- Patient resource – After your COVID-19 vaccination <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-after-your-covid-19-vaccination>

Vaccination site preparedness (new)

The Australian Government has developed site readiness requirements for COVID-19 vaccination clinics, in consultation with ATAGI.

Find out more about site requirements for:

- general practices <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-site-requirements-for-covid-19-vaccination-clinics>

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- community pharmacies <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-site-requirements-for-covid-19-vaccination-in-community-pharmacies>.

Looking after patients after they have received a COVID-19 vaccine (new)

A number of treatment options can reduce the side effects of the vaccine including:

- Give extra fluids to drink.
- Put a cold wet cloth on the injection site to ease discomfort.

Although routine use of paracetamol after vaccination is not recommended, if fever or pain at the injection site is present, paracetamol can be given. Encourage patients to check the label for the correct dose or speak with their pharmacist. Patients should also be advised to see their GP (doctor) if a reaction following immunisation is unexpected, persistent or severe, or if they are worried. More information can be found on the information for vaccine providers webpage <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/information-covid-19-vaccine-providers#covid-19-vaccine-and-other-vaccines>.

Legal authorisation of workforce and training

The 'emergency authorised workforce' (staff who do not usually deliver immunisations) refers to newly authorised workforce – who are not currently authorised immunisers and not frequently providing vaccines. The department has partnered with Torrens Health <https://www.torrenshealth.com.au> to assist with workforce surge requirements.

All COVID-19 vaccine providers, including existing authorised immunisers, will need to undertake training specific to the COVID-19 vaccines. Any additional authorised surge workforce for COVID-19 vaccines will require additional training to assist with the rollout. A summary of the training requirements is in Appendix I.

Safety of the vaccines

- Information regarding COVID-19 vaccination for older people who may be frail, including people in residential aged care facilities <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-covid-19-vaccination-decision-guide-for-frail-older-people-including-those-in-residential-aged-care-facilities>.
- More information about COVID-19 vaccine safety is available on the TGA website <https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-safety-monitoring-and-reporting>.
- ATAGI has released clinical advice for health care providers on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in Australia <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-atagi-clinical-guidance-on-covid-19-vaccine-in-australia-in-2021>.
- Information regarding COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant and breastfeeding women <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-covid-19-vaccination-decision-guide-for-women-who-are-pregnant-breastfeeding-or-planning-pregnancy> has also been released.
- Adverse event reporting will occur through existing Victorian reporting processes – visit immunisation reporting <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/adverse-events-following-immunisation-reporting>.
- AusVaxSafety will update the COVID-19 vaccine surveillance information <https://www.ausvaxsafety.org.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccine-safety-surveillance> soon on their website, including:
  - How AusVaxSafety will monitor COVID-19 vaccine safety <https://www.ausvaxsafety.org.au/covid-19-vaccine-safety-surveillance/how-will-ausvaxsafety-monitor-vaccine-safety>
  - COVID-19 vaccine safety data <https://www.ausvaxsafety.org.au/covid-19-vaccine-safety-surveillance/covid-19-vaccine-safety-data>

- – Information for immunisation providers <https://www.ausvaxsafety.org.au/covid-19-vaccine-safety-surveillance/information-immunisation-providers>.
- Learn more about influenza and COVID-19 vaccines on the department's website. <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/getting-vaccinated#flu-vaccine-and-covid-19-vaccine>

More information and resources

Australia

- Australian Department of Health COVID-19 vaccines hub <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines>
- Australia's COVID-19 vaccine national rollout strategy <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/australias-covid-19-vaccine-national-roll-out-strategy>.
- Australian COVID-19 vaccines campaign and communications materials <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccines-campaign-materials> (including videos, social media content and posters)
  - – Video – COVID-19 vaccines – Phase 1a – who will get the first vaccines <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/videos/covid-19-vaccination-australias-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-phase-1a-who-will-get-the-first-vaccines>
  - – Video – COVID-19 vaccines – where COVID-19 vaccines will be provided <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/videos/covid-19-vaccination-australias-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-phase-1a-where-covid-19-vaccines-will-be-provided>
  - – Video - COVID-19 vaccines – How vaccines work <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/videos/covid-19-vaccines-how-vaccines-work>.
- Australian Government information for COVID-19 vaccine providers <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/information-for-covid-19-vaccination-providers>
- Australian Government collection of resources for COVID-19 vaccine providers - including factsheets and guides <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-advice-for-covid-19-vaccine-providers>
- Australian Government Department of Health multicultural and multilingual communities implementation plan <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-program-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-communities-implementation-plan>
- The COVID-19 vaccine aged care stakeholder kit <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccine-aged-care-stakeholder-kit> for aged care residents, workers and their families.
- Phase 1A of COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy – Privacy Impact Assessment: Summary report and the Agency response <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-phase-1a-of-covid-19-vaccine-strategy-privacy-impact-assessment-report-and-agency-response>.
- Australian Government Department of Health Easy Read resources <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-easy-read-resources?mc_cid=d2216e3058&mc_eid=a04d05f206>

Learn about COVID-19 vaccines on the Australian Government website

- Australian Department of Health information about how vaccines work <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines/how-do-covid-19-vaccines-work>
- Australian Department of Health information on the AstraZeneca vaccine <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines/about-the-oxfordastrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine>

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- [Australian Department of Health information on the Pfizer vaccine](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines/about-the-pfizerbiontech-covid-19-vaccine) <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines/about-the-pfizerbiontech-covid-19-vaccine>

Getting vaccinated for COVID-19 vaccines on the Australian Government website

- [Australian Department of Health information on which vaccine people will receive](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/which-covid-19-vaccine-will-i-receive) <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/which-covid-19-vaccine-will-i-receive>
- [COVID-19 vaccination decision guide for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning pregnancy](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-covid-19-vaccination-decision-guide-for-women-who-are-pregnant-breastfeeding-or-planning-pregnancy) <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-covid-19-vaccination-decision-guide-for-women-who-are-pregnant-breastfeeding-or-planning-pregnancy>
- [Vaccine information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/information-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-about-covid-19-vaccines) <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/information-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-about-covid-19-vaccines>
- [Vaccine information for people with disability](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/information-for-people-with-disability-about-covid-19-vaccines) <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/information-for-people-with-disability-about-covid-19-vaccines>
- [Factsheet on what to expect on COVID-19 vaccination day at your disability residential accommodation](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/what-to-expect-on-covid-19-vaccination-day-at-your-disability-residential-accommodation) <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/what-to-expect-on-covid-19-vaccination-day-at-your-disability-residential-accommodation> Information for people with disability, families, and carers about COVID-19 vaccination day.

Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)

- Product information on Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine [COMIRNATY](https://www.tga.gov.au/apm-summary/comirnaty) <https://www.tga.gov.au/apm-summary/comirnaty>
- Product information on [AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine](https://www.tga.gov.au/apm-summary/covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca) <https://www.tga.gov.au/apm-summary/covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca>
- Advice for [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in elderly patients](https://www.tga.gov.au/media-release/investigation-reveals-no-specific-risk-covid-19-vaccinations-elderly-patients) <https://www.tga.gov.au/media-release/investigation-reveals-no-specific-risk-covid-19-vaccinations-elderly-patients>.

Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI)

- [ATAGI clinical guidance on use of COVID-19 vaccine in Australia in 2021](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-atagi-clinical-guidance-on-covid-19-vaccine-in-australia-in-2021) <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-atagi-clinical-guidance-on-covid-19-vaccine-in-australia-in-2021>
- [ATAGI advice on influenza and COVID-19 vaccines](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-atagi-advice-on-influenza-and-covid-19-vaccines) <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-atagi-advice-on-influenza-and-covid-19-vaccines>.

Victoria

- [Victorian Department of Health COVID-19 vaccine information](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine) <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine>
- [Victorian Department of Health information about COVID-19 vaccines](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/about-covid-19-vaccines) <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/about-covid-19-vaccines> including the development of COVID-19 vaccines and the approval process and ingredients of COVID-19 vaccines
- [Victorian Department of Health information about getting vaccinated](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/getting-vaccinated) <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/getting-vaccinated>
- [Victorian Department of Health information about who can get vaccinated](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/who-can-get-vaccinated) <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/who-can-get-vaccinated>

- Victorian Department of Health COVID-19 vaccine research hub <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/research-hub-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine>
- Victorian Department of Health COVID-19 vaccine information for healthcare workers <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/information-health-care-workers-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine>
- Adverse events following immunisation reporting in Victoria <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/adverse-events-following-immunisation-reporting>
- General immunisation information on the Victorian Better Health Channel <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/immunisation>
- Vaccine safety information in different languages via the World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/vaccines-and-immunization-vaccine-safety>

Contact us

For more information on the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in Victoria, contact the Victorian Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccination Preparedness Unit by emailing COVIDvaccination@dhhs.vic.gov.au.

For assistance with workforce surge requirements, contact COVIDstaffing@dhhs.vic.gov.au

To receive this document in another format, phone 1300 651 160, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email COVIDvaccination@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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Appendix I

Summary of training requirements for each workforce

Workforce	Required training	Skills and capabilities demonstration
Authorised immunisation provider (staff currently delivering immunisations): • Medical practitioners • Nurse practitioners • Nurse immunisers • Pharmacist immunisers	Must complete the **National COVID-19 Vaccination Training Program** <https://covid19vaccinationtraining.org.au>: • Core modules (six modules) • Additional modules specific to individual vaccines • COVID-19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS) training – Relevant in-system modules	Health services must ensure staff meet clinical competencies. All COVID-19 vaccine providers must demonstrate skills in: • Interpersonal skills (including consent and communication) • Preparation and handling (including multi-dose vial handling) • Adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) procedures **Note:** **Emergency authorised workforce (who are to administer vaccines) must complete a minimum of five supervised vaccination procedures** Health services must ensure staff abide by occupational health and safety requirements and fulfill reporting requirements (through CVMS)
Emergency authorised workforce (staff who do not usually deliver immunisations): • Aboriginal health practitioners • Pharmacists • Pharmacy technicians • Registered nurses • Midwives • Paramedics	Must complete **in order**: 1. **Victorian COVID-19 e-Learning Competency** <https://education-mvec.mcri.edu.au>: • Online eLearning (three modules) • Local or Victorian practical new immuniser simulation 2. **National COVID-19 Vaccination Training Program** <https://covid19vaccinationtraining.org.au>: • Core modules (six modules) • Additional modules specific to individual vaccines 3. **CVMS Training** Relevant in-system modules	
Supporting administrative, logistics and non-clinical workforce	Recommended to complete the **National COVID-19 Vaccination Training Program** <https://covid19vaccinationtraining.org.au>: • Core modules (three non-clinical modules) • CVMS Training – Relevant in-system modules	Health services must ensure staff abide by occupational health and safety requirements and fulfill reporting requirements (through CVMS)

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