



A Guide to the COVID19 Vaccine Webinar

Information for Supporters

1. Introduction

I would also like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians on the land which we gather today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

This webinar will provide you information on the COVID-19 Vaccination Program. Information changes very quickly. The information included here is correct as of today.

To remain up-to-date about the COVID-19 and the Vaccination Program please check the Australian Government website [COVID-19 vaccines | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

You can also sign up for Department of Health updates about COVID-19 vaccines at health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines

2. About COVID-19

COVID-19 is serious because:

- It is everywhere in the world.
- It spreads very easily and quickly - there have been millions of cases worldwide.
- It can cause serious illness and death – more than 2 million people have died.

COVID-19 spread in Australia has been limited by:

Contact tracing	Border control and quarantine	Social distancing
Testing and isolation	Use of masks and hand washing	

However, there have been continued outbreaks of the disease largely associated with international travellers.

3. Vaccination Program

The COVID-19 Vaccination Program has been introduced to:

- Help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Reduce the severity of the illness for people who are vaccinated.

The vaccine is voluntary – no one can be made to have the injection.

To ensure people most at risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 or having a severe outcome from COVID-19 are vaccinated first, the Vaccination Program has been divided into Phases **1a, 1b, 2a and 2b**

The Phases and prioritisation of populations were informed by the Australian Technical Advisory Group for Immunisation [ATAGI – Preliminary advice on general principles to guide the prioritisation of target populations in a COVID-19 vaccination program in Australia | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

Phase 1a of the Vaccination Program is underway

Led by the Australian government and organised in consultation with providers and residential care facilities. It includes the highest priority groups:

- People living in residential aged and disability care settings with more than 2 people, at risk of serious illness.
- Workers in residential aged care, and disability care settings with more than 2 people
- Workers likely to come into contact with COVID-19 e.g., COVID-testing sites, paramedics, ED and ICU staff.

Phase 1b includes:

- People aged 70 years and older.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 55 years and older.
- People who work in defence, police, fire, emergency services and meat processing (proof of occupation required)
- People aged 18 and 69 years with an **underlying medical condition (evidence/proof required)**.

Evidence can include:

Clinic records if attending their usual GP	A referral from GP or treating specialist	Medical history, Chronic disease care plan, Hospital discharge summary
My Health Record	A Phase 1B Declaration Form	Prescription for a 1b medical condition

Vaccinators for 1b will:

- Confirm eligibility for 1b for first dose only
- Record the proof/evidence provided, but not reason for eligibility.

[Priority groups for COVID-19 Vaccination Program: Phase 1b | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

Phase 1b underlying conditions include:

IMMUNOCOMPROMISED			
Solid organ transplant recipients	Bone marrow transplant recipients	Haematological diseases or cancers including leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma	Non-haematological cancer
Adult survivors of childhood cancers	Chronic inflammatory conditions* on medical treatments e.g., Lupus, Crohn's Disease	Primary or acquired immune deficiency – congenital and HIV/AIDS	Severe mental health issues including bi-polar disorder and Schizophrenia
OTHER CONDITIONS			
Chronic renal, heart or lung disease	Chronic liver disease	SOME neurological conditions Stroke, MS, MND, dementia, Parkinson's Disease	Diabetes

Severe obesity	Poorly controlled blood pressure	Down Syndrome Muscular Dystrophy	Traumatic brain and spinal cord injury
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Phase 1b also now includes:

Included	Excluded	Where	Requirements
<p>Essential carers (paid and unpaid) including carers who are also family members of someone with disability or an elderly person.</p> <hr/> <p>Disability support volunteers who provide support to people in their homes, respite care, educational, employment and leisure settings.</p> <hr/> <p>People with a disability attending centre-based services (e.g., day programs, supported employment).</p>	<p>Family members of people with disability who are not carers.</p>	<p>Phase 1b sites by appointment or by other arrangement.</p>	<p>Carers documentation or proof of occupation (ID card or letter from employer or centre-based support provider).</p> <p>Where none of these are available, individuals may complete a <i>Phase 1B Declaration Form</i></p>

Phase 1b Vaccination locations

Most individuals in Phase 1B will **make an appointment** through the National Booking Service or provider's own booking system and attend the clinic to be vaccinated

GP Respiratory Clinics, state vaccination clinics, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and some GPs will commence providing COVID-19 vaccines from Phase 1B

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) GP respiratory clinics | Australian Government Department of Health](#) Has a list of clinics locations by state/territory.

States and Territories will manage vaccination of their healthcare workforce and emergency services personnel.

Phase 2a

- People aged between 50 and 69 years.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 18-54 years.
- Other critical and high-risk workers

Phase 2b

- Everyone else.
- Dates are not available yet for Phases 1b, 2a, 2b. Phases will overlap.

People who change their mind can get vaccinated in a later Phase.

The Department of health has developed a tool to help people work out which Phase they will be in [When will I get a COVID-19 vaccine? | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

By answering some questions, the Vaccine Eligibility Checker tells you which Phase you are likely to be in. [Vaccines Eligibility Checker \(healthdirect.gov.au\)](#)

4. Vaccines

Two vaccines approved in Australia. Current advice is to allow 2 weeks between COVID and seasonal flu vaccine.

Pfizer Vaccine

- Available at 30–50 hospital hubs in urban and rural locations around Australia
- More hubs established as more vaccine becomes available.
- 2 doses are provided at least three weeks apart

AstraZeneca Vaccine

- 2 doses between 4 and 12 weeks apart (shown to be more effective at 12-week interval).
- Available at GP respiratory clinics, General Practices that meet specific requirements, Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Services, and state-run vaccination clinics.

Post Vaccination Symptom Checker for side effect includes when to call 000 or a GP [COVID-19 Vaccine Side Effect Checker | healthdirect](#) Vaccination reactions are **monitored** through the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Ingredients and side effects information [Are COVID-19 vaccines safe? | Australian Government Department of Health](#). Or call National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080.

5. Vaccination Records

COVID-19 vaccine administration is to be recorded in the Australian Immunisation Register – ATAGI requirement.

Vaccination records can be viewed online through a person's:

- Medicare account
- MyGov account
- My Health Record account.

The website [COVID-19 vaccines | Australian Government Department of Health](#) has information for **COVID-19 vaccines providers** (people giving vaccinations).

It includes information from ATAGI about:

- People who should not have the Pfizer vaccine.
- Conditions and occupations that determine priority vaccination.
- Special populations (immunocompromised, history of COVID-19)
- Decision aids to assist people who are or want to be pregnant, and the frail aged.

6. Giving consent

ATAGI has made consent forms which can be found using this link [COVID-19 vaccination – Consent form for COVID-19 vaccination \(health.gov.au\)](https://www.health.gov.au/COVID-19/vaccination-consent-form)

Consent forms have information on what will happen at the appointment, including questions about:

- Allergies and particularly anaphylaxis
- If you have an Epi-Pen or used to
- Whether you are immunocompromised
- Patient identification information, including whether Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

The CONSENT section of the form includes for **the individual to sign and date** to say that they:

- Have received and understood information about COVID-19 vaccination
- No underlying medical conditions apply and/or have been discussed with their regular health provider and/or the vaccination provider
- Agreed to 2 doses of the vaccine.

OR

Space for person to consent or **legal guardian or substitute decision maker declaration and consent for the person named** to receive COVID-19 vaccination.

Information about giving consent

ATAGI provides the following guidelines about consent and include FAQs. This is targeted at providers. It does not specifically reference people with disability.

- [ATAGI immunisation provider guide to obtaining informed consent for COVID-19 vaccine \(health.gov.au\)](https://www.health.gov.au/healthcare-providers/immunisation/immunisation-provider-guide-to-obtaining-informed-consent-for-covid-19-vaccine)

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has produced an optional consent form for use in residential disability settings in Phase 1a.

- [Disability Provider Alert - COVID-19 Vaccination: 26 February \(dss.gov.au\)](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-work/our-approach-to-work/our-approach-to-work/disability-provider-alert-covid-19-vaccination-26-february)

This consent form refers to NDIS supported decision making principles including

- [Overview of the NDIS Operational Guideline - Communicating with people with disability | NDIS](https://www.ndis.gov.au/program/operational-guidelines/communicating-with-people-with-disability)

Easy Read information on how to give consent can be found at

- [COVID-19 vaccine: Giving your consent - Easy Read version \(health.gov.au\)](https://www.health.gov.au/healthcare-providers/immunisation/covid-19-vaccine-giving-your-consent-easy-read-version)

Queensland and Victoria have developed information for guardians and legal decision makers specific to COVID-19 vaccination. Links are at the end of this document.

7. Decision Tool

Speak Out is producing a decision tool to help people with intellectual disability decide whether or not to have the vaccine.

The tool is expected later this month (March) and will be available on the Advokit website:

- [About – Advokit](#)
- The website also has information about COVID-19

Advokit is a partnership between the Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) and Inclusion Australia (IA).

Resources are available include 10 Easy Read resources from the Department of Health and information about the UK Variant of COVID-19:

- [Resources – Advokit](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination – Easy Read resources | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

8. Vaccine Providers after Phase 1a is finished

- General Practitioners can choose to be involved from Phase 1b onward. GPs be prioritized so the vaccine is available across Australia, not just in cities.
- GP respiratory clinics
- Some doctor's surgeries
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- Vaccination clinics
- Pharmacies.

Vaccination locations should be physically accessible and provide accessible communication options.

Information on home visit should be available later in the year.

State/Territory	Name	Does this resource give specific information about the COVID19 vaccine?	Link	This website will give you information on
Australian Capital Territory	Public Trustee and Guardian	No	http://www.publictrustee.act.gov.au/guardianship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about Guardianship • Principles to be followed by Guardians in making decisions • Links to Fact Sheets on Guardianship for Private Guardians and National Standards for Guardians
New South Wales	NSW Trustee and Guardian	No	https://www.tag.nsw.gov.au/guardianship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about Guardianship • Guardian support services • Supported decision-making and capacity • Information for medical and healthcare practitioners
Northern Territory	Office of the Public Guardian	No	https://publicguardian.nt.gov.au/guardianship/information-guardians#accordion-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guardianship principles and responsibilities • Responsibilities for health care decisions • Advance consent decisions

Queensland	Office of the Public Guardian	Yes	https://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au/about-us/news-and-information/opg-news/consent-process-for-COVID-19-vaccination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent process for the COVID19 vaccination • Consent process where the Public Guardian is not guardian for health care matters • What if the adult does not want the vaccination?
South Australia	Office of the Public Advocate	No	http://opa.sa.gov.au/article/view/83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how the Office of the Public Advocate SA is finalising its process for consenting to the COVID19 vaccine • Links to Frequently Asked Questions and Fact Sheets
Tasmania	Office of the Public Guardian	No	https://www.publicguardian.tas.gov.au/about_us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the role of a Public Guardian • List of Frequently Asked Questions • Health Care Decisions
Victoria	Office of the Public Advocate	Yes	https://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/medical-consent/guideline-on-the-administration-of-the-COVID-19-vaccine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guideline on the administration of the COVID19 vaccine • The process for giving consent • Other information to consider when making a decision to consent to the vaccine or not
Western Australia	Office of the Public Advocate	No	https://www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au/M/making_treatment_decisions.aspx?uid=4727-3795-2343-5639	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making healthcare decisions • Role of the public advocate • Links to resources about healthcare and medical treatment decisions


