



Australian Government

COVID-19 VACCINATION

COVID-19 booster vaccination information for residents of aged care facilities

Information current as at 28 October 2021

From 8 November 2021, the Australian Government will roll out a national COVID-19 vaccine booster program for people in residential aged care.

The COVID-19 vaccine booster program is recommended by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

The expert advice is that people are eligible for a booster vaccination if they completed their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine more than six months ago. Read [ATAGI recommendations on the use of a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine | Australian Government Department of Health](#).

Every resident living in an aged care facility who has received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine will be offered a Pfizer vaccine booster dose.

Your facility staff will discuss with you, or your substitute decision maker, whether you consent to receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster and they will assist you to complete a consent form.

Consenting residents who received their second dose vaccination at least six months ago can receive a booster vaccine at an in-reach clinic at your facility.

The booster clinic will be scheduled to happen at least six months after your facility held the second dose vaccination clinic for residents.

Added protection for people who are fully vaccinated

Aged care residents who have had two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine can be reassured that they are fully vaccinated.

People who have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine means they are very well protected against serious illness, hospitalisation or death from COVID-19.

However, a booster dose will boost your immune response and provide an additional layer to further reduce the risk of breakthrough infection (when a fully vaccinated person gets COVID-19 and is at risk of transmitting the virus to others).

When you are eligible to receive your booster vaccination

Residents in aged care facilities who received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine at least six months ago are now eligible for a booster dose.

These residents will be offered a COVID-19 booster dose through Commonwealth in-reach clinics, like those that delivered the initial first and second dose clinics at your facility earlier this year.

Workers will also be offered a booster dose at the in-reach clinics if at least six months has passed since they received their second dose.

Your facility will notify you when the COVID-19 vaccine booster clinic is scheduled. This will occur in the coming months - at least six months after the facility held its second dose COVID-19 vaccination clinic for residents.

Every residential aged care facility across Australia will be allocated a Commonwealth vaccine provider. This provider will deliver a booster clinic for all residents and workers who completed their primary course (two doses) at least six months earlier.

Your facility will discuss the booster program and scheduled date of the booster clinic with you.

If you received your second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination less than six months ago, you will not be due for your booster yet. However, your facility will ensure you can receive a booster vaccination from a visiting GP or pharmacist when at least six months has passed since you had your second dose.

If you have only received your first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, you can receive your second dose of a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at the facility's booster clinic. Your facility will arrange for you to receive your booster dose within the recommended interval (at least six months) from a visiting GP or pharmacist.

If you have not yet been vaccinated, you can receive your first dose of a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at the facility's booster clinic. Your facility will arrange for you to receive your second dose and booster dose within the recommended intervals from a visiting GP or pharmacist.

Providing consent

All residents in aged care must provide valid consent before receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, including for a booster vaccine.

Your facility is responsible for obtaining your consent to vaccination.

Facilities will support residents to consent to a booster vaccination and they will make residents' consent forms available to the Commonwealth vaccine provider on the day of clinic.

Aged care providers keep a record of resident's consent to share with those who administer the vaccine for recording on the Australian Immunisation Register.

Consent by a guardian or substitute decision-maker

In some cases, a guardian or substitute decision maker will be responsible for consenting to vaccination on behalf of a resident in aged care.

Some jurisdictions have specific requirements relevant to guardians or substitute decision makers who are consenting on behalf of another person.

If consenting to COVID-19 vaccination on behalf of a resident living in an aged care facility, please refer to the enduring guardianship legislation in your state or territory.

Is a booster dose the same as a third dose, and should I get a booster if I've already had a third dose?

A booster vaccination is different to a third dose.

ATAGI has recommended only people who are [severely immunocompromised](#) should receive a third dose as part of their primary course.

ATAGI has not yet issued advice on whether people who require a third dose will need a booster.

Safety of COVID-19 booster dose

Common, mild side effects following a booster dose may be like those some people may have experienced after their previous COVID-19 vaccinations. These include a headache or mild fever and generally do not last more than 24 hours.

If you have any concerns, please speak with your GP or other allied health professional.

Type of vaccine to be used for booster doses

The Pfizer (Corminaty) COVID-19 vaccine is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and recommended by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) for the COVID-19 booster program in Australia.

You can have the Pfizer vaccine as a booster no matter which vaccine brand you had for your first two doses.

You can also receive the AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria) vaccine as your booster if you:

- can't have the Pfizer vaccine for medical reasons
- had two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine previously and prefer to receive this vaccine as your booster.

Where can I get information to help me decide about getting a COVID-19 booster vaccination?

For more information visit the Department of Health website page for [residents in aged care](#).