



Australian Government

Australia's COVID-19
Vaccine Roadmap

COVID-19
VACCINATION

Safe. Effective. Free.

Phase 1B COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out

General Practice Guidance

23 February 2021

This document contains the latest advice for general practice on the COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out.

Please note that details are continuously evolving and the information contained within this document may supersede previous advice.

You can view the Frequently Asked Questions on the Expression of Interest at

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-expression-of-interest-for-primary-care-participation-in-phase-1b-covid-19-vaccine-rollout>



1. COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Confirmation of eligibility and commencement

The attached letter provides confirmation of general practice eligibility to participate in the Australian COVID-19 vaccination roll-out program.

Practices will receive further documentation within a week notifying them of their proposed commencement date. The commencement letter will contain an **on-boarding pack** that provides the administrative and operational details to facilitate entry into the program.

Prior to commencement, practices will be directed to complete the online *AstraZeneca (AZ) Vaccination Site Requirements Site Readiness Checklist and Declaration*. This declaration is intended to provide the Australian Government with important information regarding the capacity of potential AZ vaccination sites to receive, store, handle and administer the AZ vaccine.

The Vaccine Operation Centre

The Commonwealth Department of Health has established a Vaccine Operations Centre (VOC). Following on-boarding, the VOC will be your central contact point in the Commonwealth Department of Health to assist you with the management of the operations component of the national COVID-19 vaccine roll-out program. The VOC will:

- manage vaccine allocation and ordering across vaccination sites
- manage and coordinate safe delivery and storage of vaccines with the contracted logistics providers DHL and Linfox
- coordinate the response to incidents impacting the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out program.

The VOC hours of operation are between 7am to 10pm (AEST) and contact details will be circulated in the on-boarding pack.

Role of the Primary Health Network

Primary health networks (PHNs) will continue to work closely with the Australian Government Department of Health and vaccine providers on the implementation of Phase 1b of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out.

PHNs will support vaccine providers by providing advice, disseminating information, coordinating with states and territories on jurisdictional roll-out activities, and assisting with the integration into local clinical pathways.

Funding Arrangements

New MBS COVID-19 suitability assessment vaccine items

16 new temporary MBS COVID-19 vaccine suitability assessment items have been introduced, categorised by:

- **Practitioner** (GP/Medical Practitioner);
- **Location** (metropolitan/non-metropolitan);
- **Time Period** (business/after hours); and
- **Dose** (first dose/second dose).

Further detail on the items is provided with the Factsheet found [here](#)¹.

Practice Incentive Program (PIP) Payments

An accredited general practice that has completed two vaccine suitability assessment services for the same patient in a clinically appropriate timeframe is eligible for a payment under the Practice Incentives Program (PIP). The PIP COVID-19 Vaccine Incentive payment is set at \$10 per eligible patient, payable only once.

There is no registration process attached to the PIP COVID-19 Incentive provided that practices are already enrolled in PIP.

¹ <http://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/news-210301a>

2. Vaccine stock

Handling and storage requirements of the vaccine have been included in the COVID-19 training module.

The on-boarding pack will contain detailed guidance on the processes outlined below, including copies of or links to forms and contact details, and information on processes for stock acceptance, management, and reporting of wastage and cold-chain breaches.

Ordering Stock

Each site will receive a weekly allocation of vaccine stock that can be ordered. Sites will be able to place orders within this allocation through an online ordering portal.. The online ordering portal will also be used for confirming stock acceptance and management.

Orders will need to include a point of contact for delivery acceptance and notifications.

Further detail on site specific vaccine ordering and delivery will be included within the on-boarding pack.

Consumables

The Australian Government has entered into agreements for the supply of consumables required for the administration of the vaccines, such as needles, syringes and sharps disposal containers to support the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out program.

General Practices are encouraged to source their own supply of consumables, however if they are unable to source through existing mechanisms they may be ordered through the Commonwealth.

Vaccines and consumables can be ordered through the same online portal, with further guidance to be provided with the on-boarding pack.

Special equipment is not required for the administration of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

3. Clinical model of care

Patient Eligibility

Identified priority groups will get the first available safe and effective doses of vaccines. More people will have access to a vaccine as more doses become available throughout 2021.

The COVID-19 Vaccines National Roll-out Strategy details the phases in which vaccines will be available to population groups.

An eligibility checker is available through the Department of Health website to support clinicians and consumers understand if they are part of the priority cohort at a particular time, in alignment with the COVID-19 Vaccines National Rollout Strategy and latest Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) advice. At the time of booking, a reminder notice will advise that a patient may be turned away if they are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine at that time.

Further guidance on confirming the eligibility for patients, including more granular advice on eligibility due to underlying conditions and how to check eligibility will be provided prior to the commencement of Phase 1b.

Patient Evidence of Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination encounters will be reported to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), operated by Services Australia. Following their vaccination, individuals will be able to access their immunisation history through their Medicare Online account, the Medicare Express Plus app, myGov or their My Health Record.

If these channels are not suitable, they can request their immunisation history by phoning Services Australia. Healthcare providers can also print immunisation history statements on behalf of their patient.

Patient Consent

As with all other vaccines, informed consent is required before administering each COVID-19 vaccine dose and providers should ensure that this is documented as per standard practices. Verbal or written consent is acceptable.

ATAGI have published an immunisation provider guide to obtaining information consent for the COVID-19 vaccine. This guide assists immunisation providers to gain consent for COVID-19 vaccination and answers some frequently asked clinical questions. This document is available on the Department's website at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-atagi-immunisation-provider-guide-to-obtaining-informed-consent-for-covid-19-vaccine>.

An **optional** written consent form has been developed as an aid for those providers who choose to use it. The consent form is available on the Department's website at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-consent-form-for-covid-19-vaccination>.

Adverse Events

Where a patient experiences an adverse event following the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine, standard adverse event reporting practices and processes should be followed. This includes reporting to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), as well as any relevant jurisdiction reporting requirements.

4. Practice registrations and training

Australian Immunisation Register

It is mandatory for **all** COVID-19 vaccine administration records to be uploaded into the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). There are a number of ways a vaccination can be recorded in AIR at the site of administration.

Regardless of which system is used, every individual who records a vaccination in AIR must have access to a Provider Digital Access (PRODA) registration. Depending on the arrangements set up within your practice, you may need to register your organisation for PRODA first.

As this can take a few days to process, we recommend that practices review their current PRODA registration and apply for any new registrations well in advance of the vaccine roll-out.

Uploading into AIR

COVID-19 vaccine administration records should be uploaded into AIR as soon as possible, ideally at the time of administration, to ensure consumer immunisation information is up to date. It will be **mandatory** for vaccination providers to report the date the vaccine was administered, vaccine brand, dose number and batch number. As per current AIR functionality, vaccination providers will also be required to submit their provider information (including provider number), and personal information of the individual who was vaccinated (including name, date of birth, gender and address).

The ways to record a vaccination in AIR include via:

- clinical software integrated with AIR (updated in alignment with new mandatory reporting requirements);
- the newly developed Australian Digital Health Agency's Clinician Vaccine Integrated Platform (CVIP) to support direct upload into AIR of an individual's vaccination at the site of administration; or
- direct upload into AIR via Health Professional Online Services (HPOS) on the AIR website.

Further details on the clinical software programs who have been integrated with AIR, as well as how to pre-register for access to CVIP will be provided in the on-boarding pack.

Vaccination Information and Booking Service

The COVID-19 Vaccination Information and Booking Service will be based on the existing National Health Services Directory (NHSD), operated by Healthdirect Australia on behalf of the Department of Health. It will provide 'one front door' where people can check their eligibility and find out where to get a COVID-19 vaccine, with links to clinics offering vaccine appointments, that the individual can then contact directly.

All approved COVID-19 vaccination clinics **must** be listed on the NHSD to ensure timely and transparent access for consumers.

To facilitate easy and convenient patient bookings, clinics that already have an online booking system should register their booking system with NHSD and can continue to operate without substantial changes to their existing processes. Preferably, booking systems used by clinics will allow consumers to book appointments for both doses at the one time.

If you don't have an existing online booking system, the department is developing a booking system that can be used by interested practices. The booking system will integrate with the NHSD, have functionality for patients to book both doses at the same time, and to facilitate patient recall and re-bookings. The booking system will not, however, be able to integrate with your patient data management system.

The on-boarding pack will request further detail about your preference of booking systems, as well as detailed information to integrate with the NHSD.

COVID-19 Vaccination Training

All health professionals involved in the administration of COVID-19 vaccines will need to be authorised to administer vaccinations in their relevant state and territory **and** also have undertaken the COVID-19 Vaccination Training Program, including the AstraZeneca module.

The training is also available for non-clinical and administration staff. They can access the non-clinical modules of the training such as handling, storage and communication.

Once all relevant modules are completed each participant will receive a certificate as proof of completion.

For more information and access to the training program please see:

www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccination-training-program

The training can be accessed at covid19vaccinationtraining.org.au **and all vaccine administrators are encouraged to complete the training in advance of the roll-out at their site. The training does not need to be completed in a single sitting. Users can save their progress and return to complete the relevant modules at a time that suits.**

Provider Numbers

Consistent data based on location of each vaccination site is particularly important for the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines to enable ordering, track and trace, stock management and consistent reporting. Existing address details associated with Medicare provider numbers have significant discrepancies and are not suitable to consistently and easily identify locations.

Immunisers at general practices are encouraged to review the clinic address associated with their Medicare provider number and update where relevant to match the clinic address that has been provided to the Department of Health for the purpose of ordering vaccines.