

AUTUMN '21



COVID-19
Vaccination
edition

PeopleBank News

COVID-19 VACCINE

Sarah Botros
Emergency
Operations Lead

“ **AUTUMN FOCUS**
COVID-19 Vaccine: Know the facts ”



COVID-19 has taken its toll on 2020; it has been a year like no other. Every person was affected by it one way or another. The COVID-19 pandemic led to prolonged exposure to stress, significantly affecting people's livelihoods, their social welfare, as well as their physical and financial health.

We know that certain populations have been more severely impacted, including the elderly and those with underlying health conditions like diabetes, heart conditions and obesity.

The great news is that the vaccine is being rolled out in our region. The rollout road map is described on page 2, and the Vaccine Eligibility Checker link (under What's New) will also help you to find a vaccine centre in your area. This rollout targets the people that are at most risk of developing severe illness, as well as those that work or care for these people. Residential Aged Care Facilities are being prioritised. From 22nd March general practices commenced vaccination, starting with a few in each area, that will grow to over 200 general practices in the Sydney North region. We know that demand is high, and we ask people to have patience while systems are refined to accommodate the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

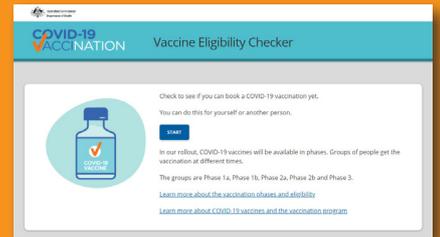
The vaccine prevents severe disease, especially for those with underlying health conditions. The vaccine has become public so quickly because it builds on work already completed over the last decade to prevent similar viruses. Every vaccine must pass several tests to make sure it is safe and effective before it is released. More than 50,000 Australians, from all populations have already received the vaccine. As of early February 2021, more than 228 million people worldwide, have received one of the two vaccines, with 50.1 million now fully vaccinated as part of COVID-19 vaccine programs around the world. That's a record time for any vaccine developed and administered thus far.

The vaccine provides our cells with instructions on how to produce a copy of a protein that is found on the surface of the COVID-19 virus. Once

[Continued over page]

WHAT'S NEW

VACCINE ELIGIBILITY CHECKER



The government has set up an online resource where you can check to see if you are able to book a COVID-19 vaccination yet. You can use the resource for yourself, or to determine the eligibility of another person.

The resource walks through details such as your age, location, occupation and any underlying medical conditions you may have. If you are eligible it you will be directed to make a booking online.

The checker is aligned with the government role out, where vaccines will be available in phases – more information about the different phases can be found on page two of this PeopleBank Newsletter.

[>> Click here to access the site](#)



vaccinated, if a person comes into contact with COVID-19, their immune system will recognise it and be ready to defend the body against it, having already been exposed to the vaccine.

It is essential to get the vaccine to protect not only yourself but your family and your community. The vaccine will help us get back to everyday life by preventing infections, decreasing outbreaks and lowering your serious illness chance. As a consequence, this will help to reduce the social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

We will need to remain vigilant for some time yet. Staying up to date on changes to restrictions and continuing to be COVID-Safe by practising good hygiene, maintaining physical distance, staying at home if you are sick and getting tested, will continue to be important.

FACTS ABOUT THE VACCINE

- The vaccine does not give you the virus.
- It does not interfere with COVID-19 test results used to look for infection (no false-positive test results)
- Side effects reported include headache, fever, muscle aches and fatigue. These discomforts are said to last one to two days.
- You have to wait at least 14 days between getting the two COVID-19 and Influenza vaccines.
- If you are breastfeeding, you can receive the vaccine at any time.
- If you are planning a pregnancy, you can receive the vaccine.
- If you are pregnant, please speak to your doctor about the benefits and risks of vaccination during pregnancy.

REMEMBER!

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine protects you, the ones you live with and the ones you love. Please take this important step toward getting life back to normal.

PREPARING FOR THE COVID-19 VACCINE ROLL OUT

COVID-19
VACCINATION

Safe. Effective. Free.

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is only available to people that are eligible under Phase 1A. There are 30-50 hubs at specific hospital sites across Australia.

The Oxford/Astra Zeneca COVID-19 vaccine is progressively being distributed through an expanding number of sites, including general practice clinics, Commonwealth GP respiratory clinics, NSW health vaccination clinics and eventually pharmacies.

The vaccine roll out road map has determined the phases of vaccination for priority groups. They are:

PHASE 1A

- Quarantine and border workers
- Front-line at-risk health care workers*
- Residential aged care and disability care staff **
- Residential aged care and disability care residents.

** This includes staff in GP respiratory clinics and COVID-19 testing facilities, ambulance staff, paramedics, ICU and emergency department staff, and clinical and ancillary support staff.*

***People who regularly volunteer within residential aged care facilities are considered staff for the purpose of COVID-19 vaccination. They are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination in Phase 1a.*

PHASE 1B

- Adults over 70 years
- All other health care workers (including those working at hospitals, general practice, pharmacy, allied health and community health services)
- Begin vaccinating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 55 and over
- People at increased risk of severe disease e.g. people with an underlying medical condition or with a disability
- Critical and high risk workers including defence, police, fire, emergency services and meat processing.

PHASE 2A

- Adults over 50 years
- Continue vaccinating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Other critical and high risk workers.

PHASE 2B

- Remaining people over 16 years
- Catch up any non-vaccinated Australians from previous phases.

PHASE 3

- People under 18 years if recommended.

Frequently Asked Questions

About the COVID-19 Vaccine roll out

DO I NEED TO GET TESTED AND WHERE CAN I GET TESTED?



Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should get tested.

People with coronavirus may experience any of the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Tiredness (fatigue)
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or
- Loss of smell.

>> [Click here](#) to find out where you can get vaccinated

HOW CAN I STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID?



To help stop the spread of COVID-19 everyone should: Find out what you can and can't do in NSW under the new laws.

- Practice good hygiene measures
- Practice social distancing
- Wear a mask in some situations

Some people should:

- **Self-isolate** – If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 you must separate yourself from other people to prevent the spread of the virus for 14 days.
- **Self-quarantine** – If there is potential that you are carrying the virus because you have returned from overseas or have been in contact with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 you must also avoid contact with other people for 14 days.

>> [Click here](#) for more

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH



Many aspects of life are affected by a pandemic. Most people have little experience of an event like COVID-19 and it can be quite overwhelming when your health, social life, employment and financial situation are impacted. It is important to look after your mental health during this time.

You can do this by spending time outside during the day if possible – fresh air and daylight will help you sleep and improve your overall mood.

While it's normal to feel anxious or uncertain during this time, you can seek help if these feelings start to affect your everyday functioning. There are a number of free support services, resources and mobile apps available:

>>[Click here](#) for more

SUPPORTING YOUR COMMUNITY



Older or vulnerable people can contact Service NSW on 13 77 88 or nsw.gov.au. This service provides daily check-in calls and can assist with arrangements for shopping, medication and other tasks.

This is a difficult time for local businesses, If you are experiencing difficulties with your business due to COVID-19, there are a number of support resources including:

- [Cash flow assistance for businesses](#)
- [Business.gov.au - Coronavirus Information and Support for Businesses](#)
- [ABA - Financial Difficulty](#)
- [Money Smart - COVID-19 Making Financial Decisions](#)

Trusted sources of Information

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The latest news and information about COVID-19 vaccines in Australia. Providing accurate, evidence-based answers to questions about COVID-19 vaccines.

>> [Click here](#)

PFIZER CONSUMER MEDICINE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Information on the safe and effective use of a the Pfizer vaccination.

>> [Click here](#)

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is responsible for assessing all COVID-19 vaccines before they can be used in Australia. There are a number of stages in the regulatory process,

Find out answers to the common types of questions you may have about how the TGA assesses and monitors a vaccine for safety, quality and effectiveness.

>> [Click here](#)

VACCINE COMMUNICATION HANDBOOK

A handbook is for everyone who wants to know more about the COVID-19 vaccines, how to talk to others about them and how to challenge misinformation about the vaccines.

>> [Click here](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic affected many areas of people's lives, including their access to and use of cancer screening programs. To prevent the spread of the disease, restrictions were put in place meaning many health care providers suspended or changed the way they delivered their services. As a result of this a number of patients avoided or delayed visiting their GP for timely consultation around cancer screening. The three national cancer screening programs (BreastScreen Australia, the National Cervical Screening Program, and the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program) saw a decline in participation during this time, particularly mammograms due to a suspension of BreastScreen services.

The long-term effects of delayed screening during the COVID-19 pandemic will not be known for some time however the good news is that screening numbers are now on the increase and you are still able to get tested.

WHY DOES IT MATTER IF CANCER SCREENING IS DELAYED?

Screening aims to detect cancers early, either by detecting any early precancerous signs (to stop the cancer developing in the first place) or by detecting cancers when they are small (and treatment options and survival prospects are better). People who are diagnosed through the 3 national cancer screening programs generally have much better survival prospects than those who are diagnosed when their cancers are more advanced.

If screening is delayed or missed, will mean that early detection of any abnormalities. The earlier these are detected the more successful the treatment.

BREAST CANCER SCREENING

Following a temporary suspension of services to protect the community, BreastScreen NSW will now gradually resume routine breast screening. Find out more at the [BreastScreen NSW website](#).

CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

It is important for people to keep seeing their healthcare provider for their cervical screening and any follow-up investigations recommended. If you have received a reminder about your screening and have any questions or concerns, please call your doctor or healthcare provider to talk about your circumstances. More information on COVID-19 is available through the [Department of Health website](#) or through the COVID-19 hot line on 1800 020 080.

BOWEL CANCER SCREENING

People eligible for bowel cancer screening are still receiving invitations, test kits and reminder correspondence about bowel screening in the mail (as long as the mail is being delivered in your area). If you have a test kit at home, you should still do the test. For more details, read the [National Bowel Cancer Screening Program COVID-19 FAQs](#).

MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns, please call your doctor or healthcare provider to talk about your circumstances. More information on COVID-19 is available through the [Department of Health website](#) or through the COVID-19 hot line on 1800 020 080.

BE COVID & CANCER AWARE!

“We are urging Australians to stop putting off any health checks. If you are due or have been invited to participate in the breast, bowel or cervical screening programs, get it done and tick cancer screening off your to do list.”

**Megan Varlow, Acting CEO,
Cancer Council Australia**

USEFUL LINKS

COVID-19 VACCINATION IN PREGNANT AND BREASTFEEDING WOMEN

Discuss this with your general practitioner.

[>> Click here for more](#)

TRANSLATED VACCINE RESOURCES

Trusted and easy to use resources in a range of different languages for multicultural communities.

[>> Click here for more](#)

INFORMATION FOR THOSE WITH AUTOIMMUNE CONDITIONS

Information on what the COVID-19 vaccine means for Australians with autoimmune conditions.

[>> Click here for more](#)

VACCINE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR CALD COMMUNITIES

The plan ensures information and services are delivered in appropriate languages and formats for CALD communities.

[>> Click here for more](#)

JOIN PEOPLEBANK

Want to become more involved in the health of your community and stay up to date with the latest health information?

Email us to join our PeopleBank and help to develop a healthier Sydney North.

[>> Email PeopleBank](#)