



COVID-19 VACCINATION

Moderna and Pfizer monovalent Omicron XBB.1.5 COVID-19 vaccines

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the new ATAGI recommendations?

A: On 20 November 2023, the Minister for Health and Aged Care accepted **advice** from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) that XBB 1.5 COVID-19 vaccines be incorporated into the National COVID-19 Vaccine Program in line with current eligibility settings.

ATAGI advise that all currently available COVID-19 vaccines are anticipated to provide benefit to eligible people, however the monovalent Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccines are preferred over other vaccines for use in children aged 5 years or older and adults who are currently recommended primary or additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine according to the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

For those who have had the recommended **2023 dose/s** of COVID-19 vaccine, ATAGI is not recommending further doses or re-vaccination with an XBB.1.5-containing vaccine at this time.

ATAGI notes the recent increase in COVID-19 cases across Australia since November 2023. ATAGI encourages all people who have not yet had their recommended **2023 dose/s** to receive them as soon as possible.

Providers can refer to the [Department of Health website](#) or the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) webpage to check which vaccines are recommended by age group.

ATAGI encourages people to follow the recommended public health measures (e.g., mask wearing in high-risk settings, staying home when unwell) during the current COVID-19 wave.

ATAGI will continue to monitor the emerging data on vaccine effectiveness and safety of Moderna and Pfizer monovalent XBB.1.5 and the changing COVID-19 epidemiology. ATAGI will provide updated advice in early 2024. Until that time the existing advice remains in place as per the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

Q: A patient has just had a [2023 booster / additional dose] of the [bivalent/original] vaccine. Do they need a dose of XBB 1.5?

A: No. If the patient has had a COVID-19 vaccine dose or confirmed infection in the last 6 months they do not need to get another dose right away.

There has been no change to current booster eligibility.

It is important to note that older vaccine formulations continue to provide strong protection against serious disease.

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ATAGI will provide updated advice in early 2024. Until that time the existing advice remains in place as per the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

Q: A patient had their last dose in [February] and want to get the latest XBB 1.5 vaccine – why can't they?

A: There has been no change to current booster eligibility.

For those who have had the recommended [2023 dose/s](#) of COVID-19 vaccine, ATAGI is not recommending further doses or re-vaccination with an XBB.1.5-containing vaccine at this time.

It is important to note that older vaccine formulations continue to provide strong protection against serious disease.

ATAGI will provide updated advice in early 2024. Until that time the existing advice remains in place as per the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

Q: The TGA approved XBB 1.5 vaccines in October 2023. Why is ATAGI only providing this advice now?

A: Assessment and supply of new vaccines is progressed in Australia as quickly as possible and any updates to the vaccines available for use in Australia are communicated with providers and the public as soon information is available.

Vaccine sponsors do not always submit for regulatory approval of vaccines at the same time in all countries which can lead to different timing and availability of supply globally.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) assessed XBB 1.5 vaccines in October 2023, however TGA approval is only one of the steps that needs to be completed before a vaccine is made available.

Before a new vaccine can be available under the National COVID-19 Vaccine Program, it also needs to be assessed and recommended by ATAGI.

On 20 November 2023, the Minister for Health and Aged Care accepted [advice](#) from ATAGI that XBB 1.5 COVID-19 vaccines be incorporated into the National COVID-19 Vaccine Program in line with current eligibility settings.

ATAGI notes the recent increase in COVID-19 cases across Australia since November 2023. ATAGI encourages all people who have not yet had their recommended [2023 dose/s](#) to receive them as soon as possible.