



COVID-19 VACCINATION

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

Information current as at 16 February 2022

Residents in aged care facilities are strongly encouraged to get a booster dose to protect yourself and those around you from COVID-19.

You are eligible to receive a booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine if you received your second dose three or more months prior.

The [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation](#) (ATAGI) recommends that all individuals aged 16 years and over are recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose to maintain an “up-to-date” status. This booster dose is now recommended from 3 months after the last primary dose. This is called the ‘due date’.

Initial protection is reduced and increased waning is evident following primary COVID-19 vaccination (usually 2 doses) against the Omicron variant.

If you have not yet received your booster dose, please talk to your facility and seek to get a booster as a priority.

There are multiple options for residents in aged care facilities to get a booster vaccine. This includes your facility:

- arranging for a general practitioner or pharmacist to visit your facility and provide a booster service
- running an on-site vaccination clinic for residents and workers, or
- requesting an in-reach booster clinic from the Commonwealth government.

The Commonwealth’s national COVID-19 vaccine booster program has now delivered booster clinics in residential aged care facilities across Australia.

However, return booster clinics are being organised because some residents did not get vaccinated on the day of their facility’s booster clinic for various reasons. This includes being unwell on the day of the clinic, not being eligible to receive a booster at the time or declining the offer of a booster dose.

Booster doses will strengthen your immune system and reduce the risk of severe illness, hospitalisation or death from COVID-19.

Timely receipt of a booster dose is particularly important for people with increased exposure risk (e.g. occupational risk or outbreak areas) or who have risk factors for severe disease. This includes people living and working in residential aged care.

Your facility staff will discuss with you, and 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 three months ago, can receive a booster vaccine at your facility.

If you are eligible for your booster dose ahead of your facility's booster clinic, you can ask your facility to organise for a visiting GP or pharmacist to give you your booster now.

You do not need to wait for your facility's scheduled booster clinic to get your booster dose if you are already eligible – that is, it is three months since you received your second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

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 three months ago are eligible for a booster dose.

If you received your second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination less than three 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 three months has passed since you had your second dose.

If you have only received your first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, you can ask your facility to arrange for you to receive your second dose and booster dose within the recommended interval, such as from a visiting GP or pharmacist.

If you have not yet been vaccinated, ask your facility to arrange for you to receive your vaccination as soon as possible. This can include 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 vaccine provider on the day of your vaccination.

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.

Immunocompromised people who have received three primary doses of a COVID-19 vaccine will be able to receive a booster dose in line with the timing for the general population.

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 (Cominaty) and Moderna (Spikevax) COVID-19 vaccines are 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 or Moderna vaccine as a booster no matter which vaccine brand you had for your first two doses. The Commonwealth in-reach booster clinics in residential aged care will be administering the Pfizer vaccine.

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](#).