



Australian Government

## COVID-19 VACCINATION

# For aged care residents and families

Information current as at 14 April 2021

Your safety is our number one priority in Australia's national COVID-19 vaccination rollout.

The vaccination of aged care residents and those who care for them is the most effective protection against COVID-19.

The Australian Government is committed to offering vaccinations to all aged care residents, workers and carers safely and as quickly as possible.

### Status of the aged care rollout

Residents in residential aged care are one of the highest priority groups to receive a COVID-19 vaccination in Australia's national vaccine rollout. Aged care residents are in a group we call phase 1a.

Vaccination clinics at aged care facilities will continue to provide the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to residents.

Residents of every aged care facility will be vaccinated, and facilities will notify residents and their families as soon as a vaccine clinic date has been confirmed.

### Vaccines for older Australians

Both the Pfizer and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines continue to be recommended by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) as safe for older Australians.

On 8 April 2021, [ATAGI](#) issued new [AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine safety advice](#) to the Australian Government. The Government accepted the recommendation that the preferred vaccine for adults aged under 50 years is the [Pfizer COVID-19](#) vaccine. This means the Government needs to review and adjust the overall national vaccine strategy.

**There is no change to the vaccine rollout for aged care residents.** Aged care residents continue to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine through on-site vaccination clinics.

As vaccine supply increases, many older Australians living in the community are now also able to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The AstraZeneca vaccine is available for older Australians through participating GPs, initially for Australians aged over 70 years and over.

The risk of serious illness from COVID-19 far outweighs the small potential risk from vaccine side effects from either vaccine.

COVID-19 is much more likely to be severe in older people and people with certain medical problems than in young healthy people. Experience from the second wave, particularly in Victoria, is that one third of people aged over 80 who contract COVID-19 will not survive. It is a very serious disease. It is causing millions of people worldwide to go to hospital and to die.

## Vaccination is the best protection

We know and we've seen that COVID-19 can spread quickly and widely. While Australia has been relatively successful in avoiding sustained COVID-19 outbreaks, the risk of community transmission remains significant.

As winter approaches, the risk of outbreaks increase as does the risk of older Australians experiencing severe COVID-19 outcomes.

The COVID-19 vaccines we have in Australia are the most effective way to protect against this infectious disease. For older Australians and others most at risk, getting vaccinated as quickly and safely as possible is critical.

## Making an informed decision

When you consent to receive a vaccine it's important you understand the benefits and risks associated with:

- receiving the vaccine, and
- not receiving the vaccine.

It is also important that you are aware of side effects that may occur.

Understanding these benefits and risks can help you to make an informed decision.

If you're unsure, it's a good idea to speak with your GP or other health professional. They can help you make a decision that is right for your personal situation.

It's also important to talk to your family or representative so that they understand your wishes and preferences.

## Vaccinating the aged care workforce

The Government is currently reviewing the overall COVID-19 vaccine strategy, in light of recent medical advice, to ensure vaccines are delivered as quickly and safely to Australians as soon as possible, with a particular focus on aged care and disability workers.

For aged care workers aged under 50, given the ATAGI advice, we are developing options with the sector to ensure all aged care workers have access to vaccines as quickly as possible.

COVID-19 vaccination of the aged care workforce remains a priority under phase 1a.

For aged care workers aged 50 years and over, GP clinics and GP respiratory clinics continue to offer and provide AstraZeneca vaccinations for those eligible in line with the new ATAGI recommendations.

**For more information, including the latest advice on vaccine safety, visit [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)**

**Anyone living in an aged care facility, their family or representative has access to free, confidential and independent support through the Older Person's Advocacy Network on 1800 700 600.**