



Dear Colleagues

The Australian Government is expecting to start COVID-19 vaccinations beginning in February.

Those who need protection the most will be vaccinated first. The phases for vaccination will be:

Phase 1a

- Quarantine and border workers
- Frontline at-risk health care workers, including staff in GP respiratory clinics and COVID-19 testing facilities, ambulance staff, paramedics, ICU and emergency department staff, and clinical and ancillary support staff
- Residential aged care and disability care staff
- Residential aged care and disability care residents and their carers.

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
- Begin vaccinating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults
- People with an underlying medical condition, including those with a disability
- Critical and high-risk workers including defence, police, fire, emergency services and meat processing workers.

Phase 2a

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

COVID-19
VACCINATION

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health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines



Phase 2b

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

Phase 3

People under 16 years if recommended.

Vaccine approval

On Monday 25 January, the Government announced [provisional approval](#) of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for use in Australia for people over 16 years. This registration means Pfizer's vaccine has met the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) [strict standards](#).

Any approved COVID-19 vaccines will have passed through the TGA's rigorous assessments for quality, safety and effectiveness.

The TGA also has the necessary systems in place to carefully watch for adverse events after vaccination.

Your members and your communities can be confident that no shortcuts have been made regarding safety and approvals.

Distribution of vaccines

Planning is well underway to support access and delivery of TGA-approved COVID-19 vaccines to protect everyone in Australia. Government departments and peak organisations across jurisdictions are working cooperatively.

Rest assured, we're moving as swiftly and safely as possible.

The Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine will only be managed through 30 to 50 key hospitals across urban and rural Australia. Distribution to residential aged care and disability care facilities will be managed by a Commonwealth vaccination workforce.

Approval of the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is expected in the coming months. This vaccine will progressively be distributed through more sites, including general practice clinics, existing Commonwealth GP respiratory clinics, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, state-run vaccination clinics and pharmacies.

The number of doses required depends on the vaccine. Currently, the advice is that both the Pfizer/BioNTech and University of Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines require two doses.

More information is available in the [Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) and the [COVID-19 Vaccines National Rollout Strategy](#).

Cost of the vaccine

COVID-19 vaccines will be free for everyone in Australia. This includes all Australian citizens, permanent residents, temporary visa-holders, and those without a Medicare card. International students and asylum seekers will also be eligible.

Voluntary vaccination

The Government has made it clear that COVID-19 vaccination will be voluntary in Australia, but the Government strongly encourages people to get vaccinated.

Information pack and translated resources

The Department of Health has developed a new vaccine website which you can visit (www.health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines). On the homepage of this website, you can choose to view vaccine-related information in your selected language. This information will be available in 63 languages.

I also invite you to subscribe to the [COVID-19 vaccines updates](#).

We are asking for your support in sharing the latest information about COVID-19 vaccines with your networks. The Department of Health has put together this information pack which includes:

- Newsletter article
- Social media posts for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Mainstream poster
- Guidance on how to film a social media video
- Talking points for community leaders.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Lucas De Toca
Acting First Assistant Secretary
COVID-19 Primary Care Response
Australian Government Department of Health