



Clinician alert #62

Pharmacy/GP advisory - COVID-19 vaccines

Effective from 12 July 2021

Comirnaty (Pfizer) is recommended for people aged less than 60 years and those who have a history of:

- Cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST)
- Heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)
- Idiopathic splanchnic (mesenteric, portal and splenic) venous thrombosis
- Anti-phospholipid syndrome with thrombosis
- Anaphylaxis to a previous dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, or to an ingredient of the vaccine
- Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia occurring after the first dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca
- Other serious adverse events attributed to the first dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca

Pregnant women (at any stage of pregnancy) and women who are breastfeeding or planning pregnancy are also recommended to receive Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine.

Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) and the Thrombosis and Haemostasis society of Australia and New Zealand (THANZ) state that the following groups of people can receive COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca:

- People with a past history of venous thromboembolism in typical sites, such as deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism
- People with a predisposition to form blood clots, such as those with Factor V Leiden, or other non-immune thrombophilic disorders
- People with a family history of clots or clotting conditions
- People currently receiving anticoagulant medications
- People with a history of ischaemic heart disease or cerebrovascular accident
- People with a history of thrombocytopenia.

Source: Joint statement from ATAGI and THANZ on TTS and the use of COVID-19 vaccine AstraZeneca <https://www.health.gov.au/news/joint-statement-from-atagi-and-thanz-on-thrombosis-with-thrombocytopenia-syndrome-tts-and-the-use-of-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca>.

If a prospective vaccinee is under 60 years old and seeking vaccination with AstraZeneca, please instruct them to speak to their GP for help in assessing their individual expected risks and benefits.

Timing of Vaccinations

- Comirnaty (Pfizer) - 2 doses to be given at least 21 days apart
- COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca - 2 doses, 12 weeks apart (minimum interval 4 weeks apart)
- The preferred minimum interval between a dose of **influenza** vaccine and a dose of either Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine **or** COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca is 7 days. In some situations, a shorter interval (including co-administration) is acceptable. Further information is available at: <https://gcphn.org.au/updated-atagi-advice-on-administering-seasonal-influenza-vaccines-in-2021/>.

Questions about COVID-19 vaccination

Pharmacist-vaccinators with clinical queries can contact the Metropolitan Communicable Disease Control department Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm Ph: 08 9222 8588

E: mcadc-covid@health.wa.gov.au

W: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services/23021678/metropolitan-communicable-disease-control/services/perth-6000-311-wellington-street>.

Safety concerns regarding COVID-AstraZeneca and COVID-Pfizer vaccines

- Vaccine providers should be aware of the need for increased clinical monitoring following administration of a COVID-19 vaccine
- All vaccine providers should review training, procedures and resources to manage any potential adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination, with particular emphasis on reactions that will need to be managed within the pharmacy/GP clinic setting, i.e. allergic reactions <https://covid19vaccinationtraining.org.au/login/index.php>
- Adverse event reports received by the WA Vaccine Safety Surveillance System (WAVSS) to 31 May 2021 indicate that adrenaline was administered to:
 - One in every 18,204 persons receiving the COVID-AstraZeneca vaccine
 - One in every 12,818 persons receiving the COVID-Pfizer vaccine
- For comparison, WAVSS reports indicate that adrenaline was administered to 1 in every 132,000 persons receiving the 2019 seasonal influenza vaccine.
- Therefore, vaccine providers need to be aware that the use of adrenaline post vaccination may be 10-fold higher than for the influenza vaccines they are familiar with administering.
- All COVID-19 vaccination providers need to ensure there is ready access to an anaphylaxis response kit containing adrenaline and that staff are competent in recognizing potential allergic reactions and responding appropriately.

Medical Advice for patients following COVID-19 vaccination

Vaccine recipients should be advised to seek clinical advice if side effects after vaccination seem severe or persist. Options include:

- Call Healthdirect Australia for health advice 24 hours a day on 1800 022 222
- Consult their own GP or an After Hours GP service
- For emergency or life-threatening conditions, visit an Emergency Department or call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

Adverse Event Reporting

All suspected Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI) assessed by a clinician are required to be reported to the Department of Health. Any suspected adverse event may be reported by patients or vaccine providers **online** to the WA Vaccine Safety Surveillance (WAVSS) System: <https://www.safevac.org.au>.

Further Information

Please see the regularly updated WA Government COVID-19 Vaccination information web page <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/covid-communications/covid-19-coronavirus-vaccines>
Or visit HealthyWA <https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/COVID19vaccine>.

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