



Safety Notice 011/21

Changes to COVID-19 vaccine indications

23 May 2021

Distributed to:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- Directors of Public Health

Action required by:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- Medical Staff
- Public Health Units
- Immunisation Staff.

We recommend you also inform:

LHD staff involved in delivering vaccination

Directors of:

- Emergency Departments
- Intensive Care Units
- Surgery
- General Medicine
- Cardiology
- Respiratory medicine
- Haematology
- Neurology

Expert Reference Group

Content reviewed by:

- NSW Health Public Health Response Branch

Clinical Excellence Commission

Tel: 02 9269 5500
 Fax: 02 9269 5599

Email: CEC-Recalls@health.nsw.gov.au

Internet Website: <http://health.nsw.gov.au/sabs>

Intranet Website: <http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs>

Review date
 21 June 2021

Updated advice regarding choice of COVID-19 vaccines

On Sunday 23 May the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation updated advice regarding the use of COVID-19 vaccines in Australia. This advice is considered appropriate given current low community transmission of COVID-19 and may change as more information becomes available or if COVID-19 transmission levels change.

Pfizer COMINARTY® COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for:

- People under the age of 50
- People with a past history of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST)
- People with a past history of heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)
- People with a past history of splanchnic (mesenteric, portal, splenic) vein thrombosis
- Patients with anti-phospholipid syndrome with thrombosis
- People with contraindications to COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, i.e.
 - 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 (These events should be reported to the local Public Health Unit. A specialist service is available to support clinical decision making and advice)

The following groups can continue to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine:

People who are 50 years of age and over (other than those with the conditions above), including:

- 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 current or past history of thrombocytopenia (low platelet count).

ATAGI reinforces that people of any age who have had their first dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca without any serious adverse events can receive the second dose.

Access to Pfizer Comirnaty® COVID-19 vaccine or other vaccines

- Patients who receive medical advice that Pfizer is the preferred vaccine but they are not currently eligible should regularly check the COVID-19 vaccine [eligibility checker](#) and monitor the 'clinic booking' link to maintain their awareness of the local availability of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, as this may change
- LHDs may choose to make direct referrals to local Pfizer vaccination clinics available for senior LHD clinicians with patients who need an alternate vaccine
- Patients under the age of 50 can already access available NSW Health clinics through the vaccine [eligibility checker](#)

Suggested actions required by Local Health Districts/Networks

1. Ensure clinicians are aware of updated advice regarding COVID-19 vaccines
2. Remind clinicians to remain alert to possible Adverse Events Following Immunisation, particularly for COVID-19 vaccines, and report to public health units.



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Specialist immunisation advice

If specialist advice is needed, for example in relation to management of the second dose of vaccine, contact the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) NSW Immunisation Specialist Service (NSWISS)

☎ Phone: 1800 679 477 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) **OR**

✉ Email: SCHN-NSWISS@health.nsw.gov.au

For urgent after-hours clinical support, contact NSWISS via The Children's Hospital at Westmead switchboard on ☎ 02 9845 0000

Contraindications and precautions to immunisation with COVID-19 vaccines

It is important that patients are provided with the latest advice regarding which COVID-19 vaccine is recommended. Latest information for clinicians is available at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/vaccine/Pages/clinicians.aspx>. This advice changes regularly as additional information around vaccine safety becomes available.

Where clinical advice is required regarding interpretation of this advice please contact the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) NSW Immunisation Specialist Service (NSWISS).