



Australian Government



# Primary Care Vaccine Roll-out

## Provider Bulletin

28 February 2023

*Bulletins provide you with regular updates and guidance on the COVID-19 Vaccine Program.*

### Key Messages

#### ATAGI UPDATE

#### Moderna (Spikevax) Bivalent Original/Omicron BA.4-5 COVID-19 vaccine

On 17 February 2023, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) provisionally **approved** the Moderna's COVID-19 Bivalent (Original/Omicron BA.4/BA.5) booster dose vaccine. Following this the ATAGI has provided the following **recommendations**:

- the Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 vaccine can be used in eligible adolescents and adults aged 12 years and older who are recommended (or advised to consider) a COVID-19 booster dose according to **ATAGI 2023 Booster Advice**.
- all currently available COVID-19 vaccines are anticipated to provide benefit as a booster dose, however bivalent booster vaccines, including the Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 vaccine and Pfizer Bivalent BA.4-5 vaccine, are preferred over other vaccines.
- the Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 vaccine is **not registered** for use in children aged under 12 years or as a primary course vaccination.
  - currently the Pfizer 5-11 years (**orange**) vaccine, is the only **available COVID-19 vaccine** for use in this age group.

The Australian Government will include the Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program for boosters in people aged 12 years or older from **April 2023**.

All sites currently participating in the COVID-19 Vaccine Program will be onboarded for **Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5** in the coming weeks.

## MODERNA UPDATES

### Supplies Secured of Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 Vaccine

The Australian Government has secured 3 million doses of the Moderna COVID-19 Bivalent BA.4-5 vaccine to ensure an adequate portfolio of COVID-19 vaccines is available in Australia.

The Moderna Bivalent BA.4-5 formulation is **not currently available** in Australia. These Moderna doses are expected to be available in Australia from **April 2023**.

These doses will be the first COVID-19 vaccine to be supplied in Australia in **pre-filled syringes** as opposed to vials with multiple doses in them. Pre-filled syringes are widely used across the world for annual flu doses, heparin injections, and an increasing list of injectable therapies across multiple diseases.

## HALTON REVIEW INTO COVID-19 VACCINE AND TREATMENT PROCUREMENT

Professor Halton was tasked with forensically examining the procurement arrangements – and ensuring they were fit-for-purpose in light of what we have learned about the COVID-19 pandemic.

The review was commissioned to ensure all eligible people in Australia have access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, now and into the future.

The Government has carefully considered Professor Halton's review and fully accepted seven of the eight recommendations contained in her report.

A recommendation relating to the National Medical Stockpile has been partially accepted.

Professor Halton's recommendations included the need for public health campaigns around vaccine uptake, an updated COVID-19 policy framework, the streamlining of advisory structures, a review of vaccine distribution arrangements, and the need to ensure adequate supplies of therapeutics and vaccines across 2023 and 2024.

Professor Halton's report and the Government's response is available [here](#).

## MEDICARE SUPPORT FOR COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

From **1 February 2023**, the vaccine suitability assessment MBS items were streamlined and simplified to reflect integration of these services into routine care.

The Remote supervision items (MBS items 93600 and 93661) remain available to continue to ensure access to boosters for those unable to attend a vaccination site. The items allow an appropriately qualified health professional (such as a nurse or Aboriginal Health Worker) to conduct a COVID-19 Vaccine Suitability Assessment on behalf of a General Practitioner (GP) or Other Medical Practitioner (OMP).

See **attached** summary of streamlined MBS items available for 2023 Booster Doses and in-reach services.

Further information on changes can be found [here](#).

## UPDATED RESOURCES

### Pfizer Bivalent (BA.4-5)

- The **attached Factsheet** provides further information about the Pfizer Bivalent (BA.4-5) 12 years+ (**Grey**) vaccine.
- The **attached Pfizer Bivalent Comparison** poster has been developed to assist sites to distinguish between the two Pfizer Bivalent vaccines.

### General

- **Attached FAQ's** for sites administering 2023 Booster Doses.
- The updated **COVID-19 vaccine Comparison Poster** has been developed to help avoid vaccine administration errors.
- The updated **ATAGI Clinical Guidance** has been updated to reflect the ATAGI 2023 booster advice.
- The **attached AIR table** is a reminder of the AIR codes that should be used for COVID-19 Vaccinations.