



# COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose for residents of aged care facilities

Information current as at 30 March 2022

Staying up to date with the recommended COVID-19 vaccinations will continue to protect you from the risk of serious illness, hospitalisation or death from COVID-19. This is particularly important as we approach the winter season.

The expert Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [recommends](#) an **additional COVID-19 booster before winter** for residents in aged care facilities.

COVID-19 vaccinations are free, safe and effective.

## Why do I need a COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose?

Because vaccinations become less effective over time, the recommended COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose will bolster your immunity for optimal protection over the winter season.

## When will I be able to receive my COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose?

From 4 April 2022, you can receive your COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose from **4 months** after your initial booster dose.

## Can I have my COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose at a shorter interval than 4 months?

If required, ATAGI advise it is safe to receive your winter vaccine dose at a shorter interval, but no less than 3 months after your initial booster.

## Where can I get my COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose?

Your facility will now be planning its COVID-19 Winter Dose vaccination clinic to be held on-site for residents.

Your facility's COVID-19 Winter Dose vaccination clinic will be delivered by:

- a primary care provider such as a visiting GP or pharmacist,
- an aged care provider approved to administer COVID-19 vaccines, or
- a Commonwealth in-reach clinic.

As part of the preparation, your facility staff will discuss the benefits of the winter vaccine dose with you, advise you on the timing of vaccination clinics and seek your consent to be vaccinated.

## Will help be available to complete the required vaccination consent form?

Your facility will provide assistance in completing your vaccination [consent form](#) prior to the scheduled clinic.

## Do I have to wait for the scheduled clinic at my facility to get my COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose?

It is important to know that you can ask your facility to arrange for a visiting GP or pharmacist to administer your COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose as soon as you are eligible – you do not need to wait for a scheduled clinic at your facility. You can also visit your GP or local pharmacy for your vaccination.

## Is a COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose the same as a booster dose?

No. A COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose is **in addition** to the recommended booster dose (which can be three or more months after completing a primary course of a COVID-19 vaccine).

ATAGI recommends the additional COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose to people who have received their booster dose and who are particularly vulnerable to severe illness from COVID-19:

- people living in residential aged and disability care accommodation
- people aged 65 years and older
- people aged 16 years and older who are severely immunocompromised, and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over.

## Can I get a COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose and annual flu vaccination at the same time?

It is anticipated this winter Australia will see an increase in respiratory viruses such as influenza, as well as in COVID-19 cases.

In addition to the COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose, it is recommended that you receive your annual flu vaccination. Under the National Immunisation Program, people aged over 65 can receive the flu vaccination for free.

In some cases, you may also be able to receive your annual flu vaccination on the same day as your COVID-19 Winter vaccination.

ATAGI advises that it is safe to receive both vaccines at the same time. Ask your facility if this can be arranged for you.

If you have any concerns, please talk to your doctor or other health professional about the benefits and risks of vaccination.

You can also call the COVID-19 Helpline on 1800 020 080 (select option 3) for any questions about vaccination.

### **Can I get the Winter vaccine dose if I had COVID-19 recently?**

The additional winter booster dose can be given from 4 months or longer after a person has received their first booster dose, or from 4 months after a confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, if infection occurred since the person's first COVID-19 booster dose.

### **I am severely immunocompromised and have received three doses and a booster. Should I still get the additional COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose?**

Yes, it is recommended. Immunocompromised people who have received three primary doses and a booster of a COVID-19 vaccine will be able to receive a Winter vaccine dose in line with ATAGI's recommended interval – 4 months after the initial booster (and no less than 3 months after the initial booster).

### **Safety of COVID-19 Winter vaccine dose**

Common, mild side effects following a Winter vaccine dose may be like those some people may have experienced after their previous COVID-19 vaccinations. These include a headache or mild fever and generally do not last more than 24 hours.

If you have any concerns, please speak with your GP or other allied health professional.

### **Where can I get more information?**

For more information visit the Department of Health website page for [residents in aged care](#) or call the COVID-19 Helpline on 1800 020 080 (select option 3 of for interpreting services select option 8).