

Requests for alternative COVID-19 Vaccines

Information for Local Health Districts/ Specialty Health Networks

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) provides [clinical guidance on use of COVID-19 vaccines in Australia](#). This includes advice about medical contraindications and precautions to the COVID-19 vaccines that are currently available for use in Australia.

The type of COVID-19 vaccine that people are offered will depend primarily on their age, risk of exposure and serious illness from COVID-19 and whether they have any contraindications to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

People aged 60 years and over who do not have a medical contraindication(s) to the [AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine](#) are encouraged to access the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine through a participating general practice, pharmacy, or NSW Health vaccination clinic.

The [NSW Immunisation Specialist Service \(NSWISS\)](#) helpline is available if required at 1800 NSWISS (1800 679 477) or SCHN-NSWISS@health.nsw.gov.au to provide clinical advice on immunisation (including COVID-19 vaccination), investigation and management of suspected adverse events following immunisation, and future vaccine doses.

Medical contraindications to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine

There are people, including those aged 60 years and over, who should not have the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. They are:

1. People with a history of the following medical conditions:

- Cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST)
- Heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)
- Idiopathic splanchnic (mesenteric, portal, splenic) vein thrombosis
- Antiphospholipid syndrome (APLS) with thrombosis and/or miscarriage
- Capillary leak syndrome.

2. People with specific reactions after the first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, including:

- An anaphylactic reaction
- Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS)
- [Other serious adverse events](#) attributed to the first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

3. People with a history of anaphylaxis to a component of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

ATAGI advises that people can still have the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine if they have had other types of blood clots in the past, such as deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism, or have other risk factors for blood clots. See the ATAGI [advice for people who have clotting conditions or a history of blood clots in the past](#).

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People aged 60 years and over with a specified medical contraindication to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine may need to request administration of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (COMIRNATY™). The national [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker](#) and the NSW Health booking system (CoVAX) does not currently enable people aged 60 years and over with a medical contraindication to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to book an appointment for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (COMIRNATY™).

Process for requesting an alternative COVID-19 vaccine

People with a medical contraindication to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine need to discuss their medical condition with a general practitioner (GP) or treating specialist. If an alternative vaccine is recommended, the individual can book an appointment via one of the following options:

1. A GP who administers the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (COMIRNATY™):

- People will be able to access and book an appointment with a GP who can administer the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (COMIRNATY™). A list of GPs with Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (COMIRNATY™) is available via [HotDoc](#).

or

2. A NSW Health vaccination clinic

- GPs/treating specialists will be required to:
 - Complete a '[Recommendation for Alternate Vaccination](#)' form and provide this to the patient. The form is to be completed to align with the medical contraindications identified by ATAGI
 - Make a direct referral to a NSW Health vaccination clinic via the relevant email contact located on [COVID-19 HealthPathways](#)
 - Email the patient's name, contact number, email address and residential address to the NSW Health Clinic contact and they will arrange an appointment directly with the patient.
- GPs are advised the NSW Health vaccination clinic will assess the request for vaccination. A referral does not guarantee an appointment or priority appointment
- LHD/SHNs are to establish local processes to manage the GP requests for alternative vaccinations.