



**The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for Health and Aged Care

**MEDIA RELEASE**

17 June 2021

**Updated ATAGI advice regarding AstraZeneca vaccine**

The Australian Government has today received updated advice from the expert vaccine body, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) about the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

The experts at ATAGI have today updated their advice to recommend the Pfizer vaccine be preferred for adults aged 59 and under.

The Government fully accepts the advice from ATAGI and will move to ensure Australia's vaccination program and advice to the community is adjusted accordingly. The detail of that advice is attached.

The Government places safety above all else, as it has done throughout the pandemic, and will continue to follow the medical advice in protecting Australians.

The ATAGI advice remains clear that the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective in preventing severe disease caused by COVID-19.

Up until today, ATAGI's advice had been the Pfizer vaccine be preferred for adults aged 49 and under based on evidence related to the incidence of the very rare blood-clotting thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) in this age cohort.

This updated advice received today is based on new evidence demonstrating a higher risk for the very rare TTS condition in the 50-59 year-old age group.

AstraZeneca remains recommended for those aged 60 and over based on the much higher risk of illness and death from COVID-19 in this age group, and the lower risk of this condition. ATAGI also strongly recommends people of all ages who have had the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine without serious adverse effects have their second dose of AstraZeneca.

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout will continue, but will be adjusted as we expand the number of access points for the Pfizer vaccine.

The 21 Commonwealth Vaccination Clinics already administering the Pfizer vaccine will be able to start accepting people aged 40 to 59 going forward as they are ready.

We will have 70 clinics administering Pfizer by 5 July, with all of the 136 Commonwealth Vaccination Clinics doing so by the end of July for the age range 40 to 59.

Primary care has been a cornerstone of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, with more than 50 per cent of all COVID-19 vaccines being administered through General Practice.

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Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.

The Australian Government will rapidly expand access to Pfizer across Australia through General Practice by fast tracking the planned transition of using this valuable workforce to administer Pfizer.

From 5 July we will start the progressive on-boarding of up to an initial 500 general practices to provide the Pfizer vaccine, including for people aged 40 to 59.

This will then expand up to a further 500 in the week commencing 12 July, and then up to a further 300 in the week commencing 19 July.

This expansion in Pfizer sites was planned to coincide with our highest expected arrival of Pfizer doses so far. During July we expect to receive 2.8 million doses. We have reaffirmed today the delivery of 40 million doses of Pfizer vaccines during 2021.

While the advice from ATAGI requires us to adjust, it can be accommodated within the plans already in place.

While these amendments do not change the objective of offering every eligible Australian access to a vaccine in 2021, it will mean some patience is required for 50 to 59 year olds seeking access to Pfizer first doses over the coming weeks.

We will see significant increases in the availability of Pfizer and our first arrivals of Moderna from September/October. We are already planning to support many more primary care providers to move to administering these vaccines as they become available.

We will continue to work closely with the states and territories, the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) on how their arrangements will be adjusted to offer the Pfizer vaccine to people aged 50 to 59, and to scale up as supply increases.

In this age group there are approximately 127,000 Australians who are fully vaccinated, 872,000 who have had the first dose only, of these 815,000 have had the AstraZeneca vaccine and 2.1 million remain to be vaccinated.

The Department of Health is providing updated advice to general practitioners, pharmacists and other health professionals administering vaccines.

The updated medical advice is made with an abundance of caution noting that the UK provides for AstraZeneca vaccines for those 40 and above, South Korea for 30 and above, and Germany has no restrictions.

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**[-ATAGI statement on revised recommendations on the use of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, 17 June 2021-](#)**