Ministers

Department of Health and Aged Care

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Start of COVID-19 booster vaccination program

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Date published:
8 November 2021

Media type:
Media release

Audience:
General public

Today, the Australian Government's COVID-19 booster vaccination rollout program officially gets under way, with the initial focus on residential aged care and disability facilities.

Everyone living in Australia aged 18 and over who has completed their primary two-dose course of vaccination at least six months ago is now eligible to have an additional booster shot.

The booster rollout program will initially target population groups that were prioritised for early vaccination because the great majority of people within these cohorts are now ready for their booster vaccination, having had their second dose six or more months ago.

As is the case for the primary course of vaccination, booster doses will be administered for free.

In relation to residential aged care facilities, the booster program will start with in-reach clinics delivered primarily by vaccine administration providers under contract arrangements with the Commonwealth.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has recommended the Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine be preferred for the booster dose – irrespective of what vaccine a person received for their primary course of vaccination.

With over 151 million Pfizer, Novavax and Moderna vaccines already secured for supply into the future, Australia is well prepared to provide booster doses as approvals are provided by the medical experts.

Severely immunocompromised people who have had a third dose to complete their primary course of vaccination are not currently being recommended by ATAGI to have a booster dose.

In the context of boosters, it is important people know that two doses of COVID-19 vaccine provide very good protection, especially against severe disease.

A booster dose, six or more months after the second dose, will make sure that the protection from the first doses is even stronger and longer lasting and should help prevent spread of the virus.

While this is the formal start of the booster program, as of Saturday over 173,000 boosters had already been completed.

Today also marks the start of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine being administered by community pharmacies.

This mean from today, all primary care sites around the country will progressively be able to offer all three COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Australia, increasing choice and making it easier for whole families to get vaccinated at the same time.

People eligible for a booster vaccine can make an appointment by visiting www.australia.gov.au or through the Vaccine Clinic Finder at www.health.gov.au.

Tags:

Aged care   Immunisation   Medical research

Former ministers:
The Hon Greg Hunt MP