



## Clinician alert #54 – all clinicians

Effective from 09 April 2021

### New information

#### **New advice on the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine**

- The Commonwealth government has released new advice on the COVID-19 vaccination program, specifically on the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.
- The use of Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer) is now preferred over AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in adults under 50 years who have not already had a first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.
- People who have had the first dose of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine without any serious adverse effects can be given the second dose, including adults under 50 years.
- Where the benefits are likely to outweigh the risks for that individual and the person has made an informed decision based on an understanding of the risks and benefits, the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine can be given as a first dose in adults aged under 50 years.
- Please remain alert for warning signs of thrombosis with thrombocytopenia (TTS) in those who have received the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. So far these have included either central venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) or thrombosis in other sites, such as intra-abdominal venous systems. These presentations have occurred between 4 and 20 days following receipt of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.
- The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will continue to review the evidence on a regular basis; it is possible that there may be further changes to this advice as new evidence emerges or the epidemiological situation changes.
- The Commonwealth government is working with states and territories to determine how those under the age of 50 in phase 1A and 1B can access the Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer) in a timely fashion.

### Background

- Evidence is evolving on TTS, a rare but serious side effect that is occurring following receipt of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.
- Available international data has been reviewed by ATAGI who have subsequently recommended changes to the Australian COVID-19 Vaccine Program.

### Action

- In the short term, and in line with ATAGI's recommendations, people under 50 who are currently booked to receive their first dose of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine should cancel their appointments unless the benefits of receiving this vaccine clearly outweigh the risks.
- People who have a current Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer) booking should continue to attend their appointment as booked.

Ref: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-astrazeneca-vaccine-in-response-to-new-vaccine-safety-concerns>

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**VACCINE OPERATIONS – LEAD CHIEF EXECUTIVE**