

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM FORUM

The Office for Seniors and Veterans and ACT Health have compiled the questions and responses below from the forum.

Please note that this information was accurate at the date of the forum on 12 July 2021.

- **How can DVA clients who only hold Gold Cards, and not Medicare cards, gain access to the ACT Health Eligibility Test so as to book a vaccine appointment?**

The Commonwealth Government has an online [Eligibility Checker](#) that does not require a Medicare card to check if a person is eligible for vaccination. This checker will also tell people where they can access vaccination. If a person wishes to book at one of the ACT Government's mass vaccination clinics, but they do not have Medicare they can ring the ACT Government COVID-19 Vaccination Line on 02 5124 7700, 7am to 7pm, daily. Save time by using the call back service and you won't lose your place in the queue.

- **How does a DVA client with a Gold Card, and no Medicare card, gain acceptance to the ACT Health Digital Vaccination Certificate?**

The Commonwealth's Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), provides an immunisation history statement that can be accessed through a person's [my gov](#) account. People are also able to call the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809 (select option 4 for a dedicated helpline for veterans). More information for card holders can be found [here](#).

- **We have had questions about the exception process for older people whose GP has advised them not to get the AZ but they are having difficulty accessing alternative vaccines because they don't meet the guidelines even though their GP has recommended it.**

ACT health follows the current national vaccination program, and the clinical advice provided by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). ATAGI currently recommends the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca for most of the adult population 60 years and older. ATAGI considers that the benefits of the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca for use in the majority of people aged 60 years and over outweigh the risks. Further information can be found [here](#).

Under the National Program, the Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine is currently limited to:

- eligible people under 60 years
- residential aged-care facility residents, through the completion of the Commonwealth's existing in-reach program
- disability care residents with complex needs who need in-reach vaccination services

- people in remote and very remote communities, where it makes sense to use a single vaccine for all or most of the community
- in very limited circumstances, quarantine, border and frontline healthcare workers who are 60 years and older and not already vaccinated, if the relevant state or territory determines the worker should be fully vaccinated as soon as possible

Pfizer vaccine is also recommended for people 16 years and above with:

- A past history of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST)
- A past history of heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)
- A past history of idiopathic splanchnic (mesenteric, portal and splenic) venous thrombosis
- Anti-phospholipid syndrome with thrombosis
- People with contraindications to COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, i.e.
 - o Anaphylaxis to a previous dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, or to an ingredient of the vaccine
 - o Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia occurring after the first dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca
 - o Other serious adverse events attributed to the first dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca

People are encouraged speak to their healthcare providers about their individual circumstances. The Commonwealth has provided information on the AZ vaccine [here](#).

- **Any information on third party or substitute consent, the importance of informed consent in the context of Powers of Attorney etc**

Informed consent for the Covid vaccination follows the same processes as any other medical procedure. More information and a consent form can be found on the Commonwealth website [here](#).

- **With regard to waiting times before and after a jab, how long to allow if someone has booked transport (including community transport)? le how much time involved in waiting for, receiving and after-care/monitoring?**

People who are going for their vaccination are asked to arrive 15 minutes in advance of their appointment. With the vaccination time plus the 15 minutes of waiting after vaccination, we recommend people allow for approximately 35-45 minutes to complete their appointment. More information on what to expect and how to prepare can be found [here](#).

- **What steps are being taken to address reluctance among particular groups (particularly multicultural, non-English as a first language)**

The ACT Government is taking measures to engage with various communities that may experience vaccine hesitancy. This includes offering ACT Health officials to attend community organisation meetings to explain the COVID-19 vaccination process. Several presentations have already been made to CALD community groups including Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (with multiple translators in attendance). There are also translated resources on the ACT Government Covid-19 [page](#). The ACT Government recognises this is an important issue and continues to work with communities to minimise barriers to accessing vaccination.

- **What is the process for boosters?**

The Commonwealth government has not yet released information on the process for boosters.

- **Question in relation to specific blood thinners**

People should speak to their healthcare providers about the individual circumstances. Some people taking blood thinners (anticoagulants) may be advised to delay vaccination if there is a high risk of bleeding after the vaccine is injected. Most people on a stable dose of blood thinner will be able to receive the vaccine without any change to their medication. (*from NCIRS FAQ site: [COVID-19 vaccines: Frequently asked questions | NCIRS](#)*)

- **Question in relation to the reduced time between the first and second AZ vaccines in NSW and whether that will happen more broadly and what the effects are**

ATAGI have issued a [statement on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in an outbreak setting](#). People should speak to their healthcare providers about their individual circumstances.