

The Comirnaty (Pfizer) Vaccine – General Practice

COMIRNATY (PFIZER) COVID-19 VACCINE ROLL-OUT

24 JUNE 2021

This attachment of the Onboarding Pack provides information and advice specific to the administration of the Pfizer vaccine in primary care.

1. PREPARING TO ADMINISTER THE PFIZER VACCINE



GUIDANCE

COVID-19 Pfizer Vaccine Training

In order to administer the Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine, each health professional involved in the administration is required to complete the COVID-19 Vaccination Program, including the Pfizer module.

All vaccine administrators **must** complete the training before administering the Pfizer vaccine, and **each site is required to maintain a record of completion** for all practitioners at their site. Staff will receive a separate certificate on completion of the Pfizer vaccine module.

The training modules are being updated regularly to reflect the latest advice on COVID-19 vaccines. All practitioners are encouraged to log back into the training platform regularly to review the latest advice.

Pfizer Vaccine

General practices will receive the Pfizer vaccine **thawed**. An unopened thawed vial can be stored at 2-8°C for a maximum for 31 days. Please refer to the [TGA](#) for the most up to date information.

The Pfizer vaccine requires dilution of the concentrate vaccine prior to administration and comes in a multidose vial, similar to AstraZeneca. Each vial contains 6 doses of Pfizer vaccine.

Once diluted, the vaccine must be used within 6 hours.

More information is in the [Pfizer training module](#) or in the [Product Information](#).

UPDATED Dosing Schedule

A total of 2 doses are required for each individual, at least a recommended 3 weeks or 21 days apart, with a minimum interval between doses of 19 days. It is recommended to complete both doses within 6 weeks.

Eligibility

More information regarding eligibility for COVID-19 vaccines, and recommended recipients of the Pfizer vaccine, can be found on the Department's [website](#).

TO DO

- Organise for all staff involved in administering vaccines to register for, and complete, the [Pfizer module](#) and record their completion.

LINKS

You can access the training at covid19vaccinationtraining.org.au.

More information on the COVID-19 Vaccination Training Program can be found on the Department's [website](#).

The TGA website contains the [Pfizer Product Information](#) and [Consumer Medicine Information](#).

A factsheet for patients about the Pfizer vaccine is available on the Department's [website](#).

NEW The [Pfizer Medical Information](#) website contains medical information and queries for health professionals on Pfizer. You can use your APHRA number to register.

KEY CONTACTS

Medical questions call 1 800 675 229 AEST 9AM-5PM Monday-Friday.

If you have any issues completing the training, there is a [pop up web chat box](#) in the bottom right hand corner of the [screen](#).

The web chat is staffed from 8:30am to 5pm EST Monday to Friday.

2. CLINICAL CONSIDERATIONS

GUIDANCE

The Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine is a more complex vaccine to manage within a clinical setting than the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine due to its specific requirements for storage and handling.

Where clinics are administering more than one brand of COVID-19 vaccine, it is important to ensure that individuals receive the appropriate vaccine (and at the recommended interval), vaccines are stored and prepared correctly and that waste is minimised. To support this, a strong clinical governance framework is required, including strict workflows and processes for separating the vaccines either by time or space.

Guidance on processes and flow

It is preferable that clinics **separate administration of different vaccines by time or space**. This would include solutions such as:

- run **two separate clinics concurrently**, with separate staff managing each clinic and patients sent to the appropriate location from reception; or
- run clinics for Pfizer vaccine and AstraZeneca vaccine from the **same location at different times**.

If clinics for both vaccines are held onsite at the same time, there must be separate, clearly defined areas for all aspects of the vaccination clinic flow, including vaccine preparation areas. Clear signs and ground markings should be used to distinguish each area.

Ideally, staff should not provide different vaccines on the same day, and should be trained to check the vaccine, type and dose interval carefully to avoid errors. Staff designated to each vaccine should not be reallocated to the other vaccine on the same shift.

It is also recommended that different vaccines are not stored or used in the same area of the clinic at the same time.

Prior to vaccination

Processes should be developed to ensure that patients are booked into the correct clinic (see page 7 for information about COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder).

Ensure that the registration systems and consent questions align to the specific vaccine the person is to receive. Pre-vaccination information provided to the patient should clearly identify which vaccine the person is to receive.

Information relating to pre and post vaccination care should be specific to the vaccine that the person receives.

TO DO

- Plan for how your clinic will operate vaccination sessions separated by time or space.

LINKS

Patient resources, including how to prepare for the COVID-19 vaccination, information on the Pfizer vaccine and an after-care factsheet for patients on the Pfizer vaccine is available on the Department's [website](#).

Information about the Pfizer vaccine for health professionals can also be found [online](#).

KEY CONTACTS

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the VOC on

1800 318 208 or

COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@health.gov.au



GUIDANCE

Running two clinics concurrently

If you are able to run two clinics concurrently, it is recommended that signage at the clinic be clear to direct individuals to the right area for the vaccine brand they are to receive.

If possible:

- a staff member should be assigned to assist people to determine which vaccine they are to receive;
- registration areas should be separate specific to each vaccine;
- patients should be given a visible colour coded aid to enable staff to easily identify which vaccine they are to receive; and
- registration staff should clearly direct the patient to the appropriate area after registration.

If these aren't possible for your practice, this separation should be incorporated into the work of whoever registers the individual on arrival. **Waiting areas must be separate.**

The clinic area should be divided into separate areas for each vaccine so the patient flow is completely separate all time (post vaccination observation areas can be co-shared). Different vaccines must never be used in the same area of a clinic at the same time.

The person responsible for administering the vaccine should re-check which vaccine the individual is to receive prior to administration and that the dose for the vaccine is correct. The individual's vaccination record should be checked via the Australian Immunisation Register to confirm if they have previously received a dose of COVID-19 vaccine, so that the same brand is administered within the appropriate interval.

Separate IT portals for each vaccine should be used to ensure that the correct vaccine is recorded for the patient and subsequently transmitted to the Australian Immunisation Register.

Patients must be given/directed to the appropriate **after-care sheet** for their individual vaccine, ideally with written instructions for their second appointment date and time.

Vaccine preparation area

Each vaccine brand should be stored in separate areas and separate vaccine specific vaccine fridges if possible. Fridges should be clearly labelled. If the same fridge is to be used for more than one brand, the vaccines must be stored in separate areas of the fridge and must be clearly labelled i.e. different shelves within the fridge with colour coded signage.

Separate preparation areas should be used for each vaccine and must be clearly labelled including colour coding.

Once the vaccines have been drawn up, they should be transferred to the administration area specific to that vaccine.

There must be regular clinical oversight to ensure that the correct preparation and drawing up process is being applied in relation to each vaccine, and the dose preparation and drawing up process for the relevant vaccine is checked by a senior and experienced clinician at the start of each shift.

3. PFIZER STOCK MANAGEMENT

ORDERING STOCK

UPDATED The COVID-19 Vaccine Administrative System has been updated to allow you to order the Pfizer vaccine in addition to the AstraZeneca vaccine. All general practices will receive the Pfizer thawed product. The process of ordering Pfizer is the same as AstraZeneca, but you will have to make **separate orders for each vaccine**. If you experience any issues with your ability to make orders, please contact the VOC. In order to place an order for the Pfizer vaccine, you must complete the Pfizer Site Readiness Declaration in CVAS.

The Department has allocated a maximum weekly allocation per site (details of your allocation is included within your letter). Like your AstraZeneca orders, you will be able to order up to your maximum allocation in the following multiples:

Pfizer (thawed)	
Number of doses able to be ordered	Vials equivalent (& order size mix)
120	20 vials (1 x 20)
240	40 vials (2 x 20)
300	50 vials (1 x 50)
420	70 vials (1 x 20 + 1 x 50)
600	100 vials (1 x 100)

All orders are due by midnight Friday, for delivery the following fortnight. This is the ongoing cycle, with orders due fortnightly.

PFIZER VIAL DIMENSIONS

Packaging may vary depending on the number of doses ordered. Each box contains 20 or 50 vials.

Each vial is a 2 mL type 1 glass preservative free multi-dose vial (MDV) and contains 6 doses.

Box dimensions:

- 20 vials (15 x 16 x 12cm)
- 50 vials (25.8 x 18.4 x 14.5cm)

CONSUMABLES

The Australian Government will provide vaccine administration products to practices in line with the number of Pfizer doses delivered. The consumables will include:

- Sodium Chloride 0.9% 10mL ampoules
- Saline Needles 22G X 1 IN bevelled 25mm
- Saline Syringe 3mL Luer Slip
- Injection Syringe 1mL Luer Slip
- Low dead space 25 gauge 25mm [1 inch] Orange Long needle

Consumables will continue to be delivered separately to your vaccine, as the cold chain requirements of vaccines cannot be compromised. If you have placed orders for both the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines and consumables and they are due to arrive in the same week, you may receive your consumables orders together (if DHL is your AstraZeneca delivery partner). Please ensure you are aware which consumables are for which vaccine product.

Top-up consumables are currently limited to one in-flight order at a time. Sites need to complete Delivery Acceptance of a top-up consumables order before they are allowed to place another.

If you have trouble obtaining ancillary consumables, contact the VOC to discuss as there may be available stock that can be ordered.

KEY CONTACTS

Vaccine Operations Centre (VOC)

Phone: **1800 318 208**

Email:

COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@health.gov.au

The VOC hours of operation are 7am to 10pm (AEST).

DELIVERIES

DHL is the Commonwealth logistics partner that delivers the Pfizer vaccine. If your AstraZeneca vaccines are delivered through Linfox, you will receive your Pfizer vaccine and consumables through DHL and your AstraZeneca and consumables through Linfox.

DHL shippers contain between 1 and 3 foam inserts.

Shippers can be kept for a maximum of 30 days before being returned via DHL couriers. The temperature probe which arrives with the thermal shipper is re-useable and must be sent back with the shipper.

DELIVERY ACCEPTANCE

To store thawed Pfizer vaccines after they have been received and delivery accepted, transfer the vial trays to a vaccine fridge at 2-8°C for use within 31 days from the date of defrosting. These requirements mirror cold chain requirements that practices already apply to other vaccines ([refer to the National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5'](#)).

The defrost date and time will be visible on the insert containing the Pfizer vials. It is recommended that you check the defrost date before you accept your delivery to determine the date at which the vaccines began to thaw. This will be the date used to determine the shelf life.



The fridge temperature must be recorded when vaccines are finally stored.

Sites need to complete a separate online [Delivery Acceptance Report](#) in COVID-19 Vaccine Administration System (CVAS) when accepting Pfizer deliveries, as these correlate directly to the separate orders placed. The Pfizer Delivery Acceptance Report will include a section for you to add the date your doses were defrosted. Same as for AstraZeneca delivery acceptance. This report must be submitted no later than 9pm on the day of delivery.

MANAGING STOCK

Sites need to complete the [Vaccine Stock Management Report](#) in CVAS no later than 9pm Friday every week. You must record your stock on hand for both Pfizer and AstraZeneca.

Note: you must complete your required reporting before you can place a new order for either vaccine.

WASTAGE REPORT

Sites need to complete a [Vaccine Wastage Report](#) to capture any wastage incident that exceeds the threshold of **5 or more vials at one time** (wastage threshold), for either both Pfizer and AstraZeneca. If there is a wastage event in that 5 or more vials have been wasted for both vaccines, separate Vaccine Wastage Reports will be required.

In the event of a potential or actual wastage incident that exceeds the threshold sites need to contact the VOC as soon as possible, and complete the Vaccine Wastage Report within 2 hours of the incident.

Wastage less than 5 vials can be reported in the [Vaccine Stock Management Report](#).

WASTAGE

Due to the short shelf life of the Pfizer vaccine (can be stored at **2-8°C for 31 days since the day of thawing**) there is a risk of increased vaccine wastage. Vaccine providers should take all necessary steps to minimise stock wastage.

UPDATED When placing the vaccines in the fridge, the expiry dates must be checked and stock rotated to ensure vaccines are used prior to expiring. It is recommended the recipient of the vaccine at the site should be responsible for placing a use by/defrost date on each tray upon arrival.

4. PFIZER BOOKINGS



GUIDANCE

COVID-19 Vaccine Information and Location Service

The COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker directs eligible individuals to the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder (VCF) which shows the clinics near them that administer the relevant vaccine brand for their age.

UPDATED Your practice will be surfaced twice on the VCF depending on what individuals enter into the Eligibility Checker. Your practice will appear for individuals:

- aged 60 and over (for the AstraZeneca vaccine), and
- under 60 (for the Pfizer vaccine).

The next time you login to CVAS, you will automatically be directed to update your public clinic information which allow you to provide two separate opening hours for the different vaccine type.

- If you are separating your vaccine administration by time, please put the relevant hours for your AstraZeneca and Pfizer hours.
- If you are separating by space, please put the same hours in both the AstraZeneca and Pfizer sections.

Booking Provider

If you have an online booking platform that is integrated with the VCF, you may choose to keep appointments for Pfizer and AstraZeneca separate. If this is your preference, please talk to your booking system provider who may be able to create a new instance of the booking system for you to manage each type of vaccine booking separately. If you use the Commonwealth Booking System, please contact Health Engine.

Alternatively, you may choose to continue managing appointments for both Pfizer and AstraZeneca using your one existing system.

TO DO

- Update your clinic details for the VCF via CVAS (if needed).
- Engage your booking provider (if needed).

LINKS

The COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker is available on the Department's [website](#).

KEY CONTACTS

If you want to change your details on VCF after they have been published, contact your Primary Health Network.

If you are having issues with CVAS, contact the **VOC**.

Phone: **1800 318 208**

Email: COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@health.gov.au

The VOC hours of operation are 7am to 10pm (AEST).