

Briefing COVID-19 BOOSTER VACCINATIONS FROM FOUR MONTHS AFTER THE PRIMARY COURSE

Version 1.1 - 12 January 2022

Boosters interval change

- The COVID-19 booster dose interval has been reduced from **six months to four months**.
- The public has been informed that this comes into effect from **5 January 2022**.
- A **booster vaccination dose** is available to anyone \geq **18 years** of age, who finished their primary COVID-19 vaccination course \geq **4 months** ago.
- People eligible for a third primary dose can access a booster dose 4 months after receiving their third primary dose.
- **AstraZeneca** boosters still **require prescriptions**.

Changes

System or Process Change



CIR

The warning flag for booster vaccination will now trigger after four months instead of six

BMV

Bookings will be made available after four months on January 17

VACCINATION PROCESS

Need to validate consumer age of 18+, confirm ≥ 4 months since primary course completion at check-in and at time of vaccination

Key Messages

- On 21 December 2021, the Government announced the COVID-19 booster dose interval will be reduced from six months to four months.
- Current operating guidelines can be found on the [Ministry of Health website](#).
- A prescription is not required for a Pfizer COVID-19 booster.
- People should discuss optimal timing for an AstraZeneca booster dose with an authorised prescriber. Advice for clinicians is also available from IMAC. The administration of the AstraZeneca vaccine as a booster dose is off-label use and requires a prescription by an authorised prescriber, in accordance with Section 25 of The Medicines Act 1981.
- People can check when they are due for a booster by going to The Covid App (Dashboard -> More Info), My Covid Record, or mycovidrecord.health.nz or by referring to their COVID-19 Vaccine Record Card.

Key Messages continued...

- The priority for boosters is people at *high* risk of severe disease or exposure to COVID-19. This includes Māori and Pacific peoples, those aged 65 years and over, and those with pre-existing conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19. Our border and health care and disability workers are also a priority. These people are likely to be eligible first as they were in the first group vaccinated.
- A booster interval of 4 months enables most people to receive their booster before the winter season.
- The COVID Immunisation Register (CIR) has been updated. The Early Booster Vaccination Warning message will display if a booster dose is attempted to be recorded in the CIR, where it has not been at least four months since the consumer received their last dose of their primary course.
- Any booster administered earlier than four months or given to anyone under 18 years of age, will be considered a 'Never Event' by the Programme and an incident report will need to be submitted.

Pregnancy Specific Messages

- Pregnant people are at high risk for severe health outcomes from COVID-19 infection.
- International jurisdictions such as the UK and Australia are bringing the booster vaccine forward. They recommend pregnant people also have their boosters earlier in line with the rest of the population.
- The Ministry of Health recommends the Pfizer vaccine for pregnant people to protect them and their baby against the effects of COVID-19.
- The booster vaccine can be given at any stage of pregnancy at least 4 months after the primary course (for most people the primary course is two doses).
- Pregnant people can have the booster even if they have had the primary course early in pregnancy.
- Pregnant people should discuss the timing of their booster, and any concern with their LMC, obstetrician or general practitioner.

Effectiveness of boosters

- Pfizer has released preliminary trial data indicating that a booster dose showed a relative vaccine efficacy of 95.6 percent against symptomatic disease (predominantly Delta-variant), when compared to those who did not receive a booster (only received two primary doses).
- Data is emerging that a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine provides better protection than a two-dose course against the Omicron variant. While two doses provide some degree of protection against severe disease from Omicron, a booster is likely to offer greater protection against transmitting COVID-19 to others and reduce the chance of more serious infections.
- At this stage, there is no data available on duration of protection against infection and disease following a booster dose. Health officials and the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group will continue to review information as it becomes available.

Booking appointments

- People aged 18 and older can get their booster dose at a walk-in clinic, pharmacy or from their GP. Here is a list of vaccination sites <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19-vaccination/>
- People can check when they are due for a booster by visiting mycovidrecord.nz or referring to their purple COVID-19 Vaccine Record Card.
- Anyone who is eligible for a booster dose can book an appointment now by calling the COVID Vaccination Healthline on 0800 28 29 26 (8am to 8pm, 7 days a week).
- If it has been more than 6 months since the second dose, people can book online at BookMyVaccine.nz now.
- **From 17 January**, online bookings for booster doses at least 4 months after the second dose can be made at BookMyVaccine.nz.

Final thoughts

Please:

- Ensure Healthpoint is kept up-to-date, including opening hours.
- Check your vaccination stock levels and expiry dates.
- Check that your collateral is up-to-date (e.g. discard the outdated Booster brochure).
- Check that you're using the most recent version of the [Operating Guidelines](#) and relevant [Policy Statements](#).
- Share this briefing pack with anyone who is covering for you over the holiday period and with your colleagues as appropriate.

THANK YOU!