

# AstraZeneca – FAQ

Information for people under 50

## **This information is for people under 50 years seeking clarification about the AstraZeneca vaccine**

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) released a statement (8 April 2021) about the AstraZeneca vaccine in response to evidence that it may be linked to a rare but serious side effect (1 in 250,000 people).

The side effect involves thrombosis, which is blood clotting, and thrombocytopenia, which is a low blood platelet count.

The risk of this side effect may be greater for people aged under 50 years, and ATAGI has advised that the Pfizer vaccine is preferred over the AstraZeneca vaccine in adults aged under 50 years.

## **I'm under 50 and haven't had the vaccine yet. What should I do?**

ATAGI has advised that the Pfizer vaccine is preferred over the AstraZeneca vaccine in adults aged under 50 years. If you are in the phase 1a or 1b group and are under 50, you can be offered the Pfizer vaccine.

We will prioritise Pfizer vaccine stock for the under 50 group.

## **I'm under 50 and I've had my first dose of AstraZeneca. What do I do about my second dose?**

ATAGI says people who have had a first dose of AstraZeneca without any serious adverse effects can be given the second dose, including if they are less than 50-years-old. If this is you, you are strongly encouraged to have your second dose as planned.

## **I'm at risk of complication from COVID-19; can I still get the AstraZeneca vaccine rather than wait for Pfizer to become available?**

In adults aged under 50 years where the benefits of protection against COVID-19 are likely to outweigh the risks of the side effect, the AstraZeneca vaccine can be used.

ATAGI advises that each person needs to make an informed decision, based on an understanding of the risks and benefits. We recommend you discuss this with your doctor.

The AstraZeneca vaccine is effective at reducing the risk of death or severe disease from COVID-19 across all adult age groups. AstraZeneca is currently the only vaccine option for many Australians because the global availability of alternative vaccines is very limited.

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## **What should I do if I've had the AstraZeneca vaccine recently and I'm concerned about the risk of blood clotting?**

If in the first three days after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine you have a mild headache that responds to over-the-counter pain medications, you do not need to attend hospital. But if you are concerned, consult your doctor.

More serious symptoms to look out for 4-20 days post vaccination include:

- Ongoing severe headaches
- Throbbing or cramping pain, swelling, redness and warmth in leg or arm
- Sudden breathlessness, sharp chest pain (which may be worse when you breathe in) and a cough, or coughing up blood.

You should consult with your regular GP if you have any concerns about your health.

## **We don't have much COVID in Australia right now; should I still get vaccinated?**

ATAGI recommends that all adults are vaccinated against COVID-19, which is a severe disease around the world, with many lives lost. Australia remains vulnerable to COVID-19 and most Australians have not yet been vaccinated.

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## **What does this mean for the vaccine roll-out? Will it be delayed?**

The ATAGI statement has significant implications for the Victorian rollout of the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccination program, which will need to be worked through over the coming weeks.

## **How long will I need to wait to get a Pfizer vaccine?**

Supply of Pfizer is dependent on the amount delivered to Australia each week. The Barwon South West Public Health Unit will be working closely with the Victorian Government to secure supply for our region.

## **Who is ATAGI?**

ATAGI is the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation. Their role is to advise the Minister for Health on the medical administration of vaccines available in Australia.

## **Who should I call for further information?**

If you have questions or concerns about the AstraZeneca vaccine, please call 1800 020 080 or speak to your GP.