



Issue 6 – November 2021

Vaccine Management Unit (VMU) Update

The VMU has returned to usual staffing and work practices and the routine and urgent delivery of National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccines to providers has resumed. Please continue to ensure that orders are placed 48 hours prior to your delivery date and that you are ordering sufficient stock to last until your following delivery.

It is important to note that:

- Urgent deliveries may take up to 5 business days to deliver

Please continue to contact the Immunisation Unit on 5124 9800 or by email immunisation@act.gov.au for all cold chain breaches that involve NIP stock. These will be attended to as required. VMU does not action cold chain breaches that only involve COVID-19 vaccines.

New vaccine delivery calendars will be dropped off by a VMU officer with your next delivery or mailed to your practice. **Please ensure that old delivery calendars are disposed of as delivery days and dates may have changed.**

A Christmas closure letter is attached outlining VMU's capacity over the holiday period. Should you have any concerns around this please contact the Immunisation Unit.

Thank you for your assistance during these trying times. Collaboratively, we will ensure that immunisation remains a high priority for Canberrans.

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Contact us

Health Protection Service Immunisation Unit
Phone: (02) 5124 9800
Fax: (02) 5124 9307
Email: immunisation@act.gov.au

Disease Surveillance

Phone: (02) 5124 9213
Fax: (02) 5124 9306
Email: cdc@act.gov.au

VACCINE MANAGEMENT UNIT CALENDAR 2022

Public holidays: ■ Delivery dates: ■

Month	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
JANUARY							1
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	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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FEBRUARY							1
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MARCH							1
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DECEMBER							1
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VACCINE DELIVERY Please send your order two days prior to your next delivery to immunisation@act.gov.au | Phone: (02) 5124 9800 | Fax: (02) 5124 9307 | Our business hours are from 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday. www.health.act.gov.au/services/immunisation

Your delivery dates are highlighted above on the calendar. If your normal scheduled delivery day falls on a public holiday, your delivery will be made either the day before or after the public holiday.

What to do if a cold chain breach occurs
Based on the National Vaccine Storage Guidelines: 'Strive for 5'

- A cold chain breach occurs when vaccine storage temperatures deviate outside the recommended range of +2°C to +8°C. The optimal storage temperature for most vaccines is +5°C.
- If a breach occurs, phone 5124 9800 during business hours.
- Vaccines must NOT be used until the breach has been assessed by staff of the Immunisation Unit. If the refrigerator temperature is currently reading within acceptable ranges, vaccines may remain in the fridge.
- Staff from the Immunisation Unit will retrieve the datalogger, assess the breach and advise on any required action.
- Do not discard any vaccines. Vaccines that are to be destroyed will be retrieved by the immunisation Unit.
- Place a 'Do not use' sign on the fridge. If the fridge temperature is out of the +2°C to +8°C range, transfer vaccines with the provided datalogger, into another fridge or backup storage (for example, an esky) and label 'Do not use'.
- In the case of a fridge failure or power outage, the fridge will need to be monitored for a minimum of 48 hours before vaccines can be stored in the fridge.
- Take steps to identify and correct the problem to prevent it from recurring.
- Take the opportunity to review your vaccine management procedure.
- For privately purchased vaccines, contact the manufacturer for advice.

ATAGI Update on COVID-19 Vaccine Use in Australia

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) have updated their clinical guidance on use of COVID-19 vaccine in Australia. The document can be found at - [ATAGI clinical guidance on COVID-19 vaccine in Australia in 2021](#). The key changes are as follows:

- **Comirnaty (Pfizer) is recommended as a single booster dose for people who completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine course \geq 6 months ago.**

- o More information: [ATAGI recommendations on the use of a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine](#)

- **Precautions for mRNA COVID-19 vaccine use have been updated; 'recent' myocarditis or pericarditis is defined as within the last 3 months (previously 6 months).**

- o See updates to [Guidance on Myocarditis and Pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

- **Updated guidance on subsequent doses after an episode of vaccine-attributed myocarditis or pericarditis.**

- o See updates to [Guidance on Myocarditis and Pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

- **Updated guidance on mixed (heterologous) schedules.**

- o See updates to [ATAGI Clinical advice on the use of a different COVID-19 vaccine as the second dose](#)

- **Timing of administration of a COVID-19 vaccine section update, to indicate that co-administration of a COVID-19 vaccine with an influenza vaccine and with other vaccines can occur.**

- o COVID-19 vaccines should be delayed for at least 90 days after receiving an anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibody or convalescent plasma.

Year 7 High School Immunisation Program Reschedule

Throughout the year the School Health Team has been busy delivering the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for students in Year 7 and Year 10 at ACT schools. Vaccines administered include diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (dTpa) and Human Papillomavirus (HPV) (Year 7) and Meningococcal ACWY (Year 10).

Due to the Canberra lockdown commencing on the 12th August 2021, the year 7 High School Immunisation Program has been rescheduled and a **Year 8 catch up program will be conducted in Term 1 2022**. This will run in conjunction with the Year 7 and 10 High School Immunisation Programs.

The Year 8 catch-up program means that catch-up requests submitted for **HPV will not be approved for students that are in Year 7 in 2021 until April 2022 when the High School Immunisation Program is completed**. This will ensure that students have a chance to receive both their HPV and dTpa vaccines at school.

Contact the Immunisation Unit on (02) 5124 9800 if you require further information or visit our website - <https://www.health.act.gov.au/services-and-programs/immunisation/adolescents>

Shingles Catch-up Program Extension

The Department of Health has extended the NIP shingles (herpes zoster) vaccine catch-up program for a further 2 years to 31st October 2023. Shingles vaccination with the Zostavax[®] vaccine is free under the NIP for people aged 70. The catch-up program offered to people aged 71-79 years was due to end on the 31st October 2021.

We are encouraging providers to identify any patients aged 70-79 who have not yet received the shingles vaccine.

In people who are or have recently been immunocompromised due to a medical condition or medical treatment, consider the safety of giving zoster vaccine on a case-by-case basis. If uncertain about the person's level of immunocompromise and whether vaccination is safe, do not vaccinate. Seek expert advice from the treating physician. It is important to screen potential patients for contraindications in line with guidance provided in the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

News items providing this advice to both consumers and health professionals have been published on the Department of Health website. See:

- News item for health professionals- [National Immunisation Program: Shingles vaccination catch-up program extended](#)
- News item for consumers- [More time to get vaccinated against shingles](#)

Rabies and Australian Bat Lyssavirus

Rabies virus and the Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV) are in the same virus family and can cause fatal disease in humans. All Australian bats have the potential to carry ABLV. As summer approaches more bats visit our backyards and people are beginning to travel overseas again. This means there is a higher risk of coming into contact with animals that carry this deadly virus. Rabies virus and ABLV are spread by the saliva of infected animals through bites, scratches, or licks on broken skin. Animals with these diseases may appear sick or be unnaturally aggressive, but this is not always the case.



Vaccination against rabies virus is recommended for anyone who regularly handles or cares for bats or anyone intending to travel to rabies-enzootic regions. Advice on rabies-endemic countries can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rabies-risks-by-country/rabies-risks-in-terrestrial-animals-by-country>.

If bitten, scratched, or licked by a bat in Australia or an animal in a country where rabies virus is endemic, it is important to wash the wound or area thoroughly with soap and water for about five minutes. If available, an antiseptic or alcohol solution should be applied after washing. If saliva from an animal went into the eyes, nose or mouth they should be flushed well with water. Medical attention should be sought as soon as possible, even if the person has been previously vaccinated.

Post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) will depend on the extent of the exposure, the animal source, the person's immune system and their vaccination history. A post-exposure course of rabies vaccine and a one-off dose of rabies immunoglobulin (RIG) may be recommended to prevent infection.



For advice on ABLV or rabies virus visit:

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/fact-sheets>

To enquire about accessing PEP please contact the Health Protection Service, Immunisation Unit on 5124 9800 or the Communicable Disease Control on Call Officer after hours on 02 99624155.

Yellow Fever Training Requirements

1. All Yellow Fever Vaccine providers must complete the [Yellow Fever Vaccination Course](#) every three years.
2. The Yellow Fever Vaccination Course certificate must be provided to ACT Health via email to immunisation@act.gov.au

On 26 November 2018, an online [Yellow Fever Vaccination Course](#) was introduced along with new [National Guidelines for Yellow Fever Vaccination Centres and Providers](#). All doctors and nurse practitioners prescribing yellow fever vaccine are required to successfully complete the training course. Yellow Fever Vaccination Centres are required to maintain a log of all practitioners prescribing the vaccine and evidence that they have successfully completed their online Yellow Fever Vaccination Course.

For further information visit - <https://health.act.gov.au/services-and-programs/immunisation/health-professionals/clinical-information#yellowfever>

Reminders

ACT Immunisation Mailing List

Please sign up to the immunisation mailing list to receive all the latest news from ACT Health Immunisation using this [link](#).



PRODA

To access Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) providers must use a PRODA account starting July 2021. To create a personal PRODA use the following link: www.humanservices.gov.au/proda. PRODA (provider digital access) is an online identity verification and authentication system. It lets you securely access government online services. To access available services using PRODA, you need to register as an individual to get your own account. To access a PRODA on behalf of an organisation, you may need to register the organisation in PRODA. The service will let you know if you need to register your organisation. A reminder that if you administer vaccines that it is a requirement to upload the details to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). ACT Health Immunisation Unit cannot enter data on behalf of another provider.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Person Identification

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are eligible for additional NIP funded vaccines to protect against preventable diseases. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children up to two years of age are eligible to receive funded Meningococcal B vaccine (Bexsero®).

Identification as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is therefore important for delivering holistic health care. This disclosure is voluntary and identification questions should be asked respectfully and in private.

Adverse Event Following Immunisation Reporting

In the ACT, an Adverse Event Following Immunisation AEFI should be reported to the Immunisation Unit, Health Protection Service using the [Immunisation Adverse Event Reporting Form \(online form\)](#), or by contacting the Health Protection Service, Immunisation Unit on [\(02\) 5124 9800](#). The new online form makes it more convenient for staff or patients to report adverse events to the Immunisation Unit. If you would prefer to print out a form to fax or email to us, please [click here](#) or for AEFI related to COVID-19, [click here](#).

Please remember that as a medical professional, you have an obligation to report an AEFI regardless of whether you were the one to give the vaccination.

Influenza Vaccination for Pregnant Women

It is recommended pregnant women receive the influenza vaccine during pregnancy and at any stage of pregnancy. The influenza vaccine is free for pregnant women as part of the National Immunisation Program (NIP). Influenza vaccines can continue to be used until the expiry date.

Pregnant women are more vulnerable to the influenza virus and are more likely to be hospitalised with severe influenza-related complications, which can result in premature labour. Babies under 6 months are at high risk of serious complications if they catch the virus. Immunisation not only protects the pregnant woman but also the baby. When a pregnant woman is vaccinated, antibodies transfer through the placenta to the developing baby. These antibodies protect the baby for the first months of his or her life until they are old enough to be vaccinated at 6 months of age.

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

We wish to advise our office will be closed from Friday 17th December 2021, reopening Monday 10th January 2022.



Please note:

- Routine vaccine deliveries will cease on Friday 17th December 2021 and resume Monday 10th January 2022.
- Urgent orders will be available in the week prior to Christmas and the week after New Year.
- If your delivery falls over the Christmas shutdown period, you will be scheduled in the first weeks back upon resumption of deliveries.



Practices are reminded to order only what is required until the next scheduled delivery, especially through the Christmas period. Storing excess vaccine stock in fridges can increase the risk of wastage due to:

- Exposure to extremes of temperature, which reduces their potency; or
- Expiry date of vaccines

As we approach the summer months, please remember the importance of monitoring and charting fridge temperatures twice daily.

Please call the Vaccine Management Unit on 5124 9800 if you record any temperatures outside of 2-8 degrees.

The staff of the Immunisation Unit would like to wish all doctors, nurses, and practice staff a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and thank you for your ongoing support of immunisation throughout 2021. Despite the challenges we have encountered this year, together we have continued to achieve high childhood immunisation coverage rates in the ACT. We look forward to continuing working together in the New Year.

 Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Immunisation Unit 	
Director Immunisation Carolyn Banks	VMU Coordinator Sarah Mead
Immunisation Coordinator Janet Hose	VMU Team Leader Raleigh Evans
Public Health Nurses Pauline Bailey, Cate Hosick & Lana Davis	Vaccine Delivery and Data Entry Connor Goldrick
Immunisation Program Support Officer Fotis Sgouros	Vaccine Delivery and Data Entry Aleksander Surdonjic
Vaccine Delivery and Data Entry Mitchell Beissner	Vaccine Delivery and Data Entry Isaac Patten