

Standard response to request for alternative vaccine (D1 and D2) Western Sydney COVID-19 vaccinations

Dear

Thank you for your email. We acknowledge your concern and appreciate your interest in making an informed decision about COVID-19 vaccination.

Both the [COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine](#) and [Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine \(COMIRNATY™\)](#) have been found to be highly effective in preventing severe illness and death from the virus.

The type of vaccine offered to people will depend primarily on their age and whether they have any of the contraindications for each vaccine as advised by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) and the Therapeutics Goods Administration. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (COMIRNATY™) is preferred in people aged 16 to under 60 years.

There are three reasons that people aged 60 years and over should not have the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine. These are:

1. People with specific medical conditions:
 - A history of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) or heparin induced thrombocytopenia (HIT).
 - A history of clotting in the veins that takes blood away from the digestive system or gut, known as idiopathic splanchnic vein thrombosis (including portal, mesenteric, and splenic vein thrombosis and the Budd-Chiari syndrome).
 - A history of anti-phospholipid syndrome with thrombosis (clots).
2. People with specific reactions after the first dose of the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine, including:
 - An anaphylactic reaction
 - Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia
 - Other serious adverse events
3. People with a history of anaphylaxis to a component of the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine.

NSW Health encourages you to access the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine through a GP or NSW Health vaccination clinic if these three conditions do not apply to you.

ATAGI advises that the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine can be given to people with a history of other types of blood clots, such as deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE), or have other risk factors for blood clots. For more information, please read the [advice for people who have had blood clots in the past](#).

If you have discussed your medical history with your GP or other healthcare provider and they recommend that you do not have the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine, you may:

1. Decide to wait to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (COMIRNATY™) or other COVID-19 vaccine later, if it becomes routinely available for your age group. Regularly check the COVID-19 vaccine [Eligibility Checker](#) and monitor the 'clinic booking' link as the availability of the Pfizer vaccine may change in the future,

or

2. Ask your GP or treating specialist to complete the attached 'Request for alternative vaccine' form. Once this form is completed, please contact your preferred NSW Health COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic to schedule your booking. We understand that one of our Western Sydney COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics, located at Westmead and Blacktown hospitals is your preferred NSW Health COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic. You can contact us by calling **8890-4786** or email WSLHD-COVIDVaccinationBooking@health.nsw.gov.au.

Please be aware, due to high interest in the COVID-19 vaccine, appointment availability is currently very limited at both Western Sydney vaccination sites.

Regards

Western Sydney COVID-19 Vaccination Team

Please note, you will be required to present the completed 'Request for alternative vaccine' form on arrival to the NSW Health Vaccination clinic.