

Script for General Practices

This document has been prepared for General Practices to assist them in responding to patients with questions about the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

What is this side effect that everyone is talking about associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine?

There is evidence of a likely link between the AstraZeneca vaccine and an extremely rare blood clotting syndrome (thrombosis with thrombocytopenia).

The recommendation from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is that use of Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer) is preferred over AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in adults under 50 years old who have not already had a first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Is the AstraZeneca vaccine safe?

Yes. The individual benefit-to-risk balance of vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine varies with age. This balance is based on factors including the increased risk of complications from COVID-19 with increasing age and the potential lower risk of this very rare, but serious, adverse event with increasing age. ATAGI has recommended the AstraZeneca vaccine remains safe to be given to people aged 50 years and over.

I have had my first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, what do I do now?

If you have had your first vaccine dose without this side effect or other serious adverse effects, you should receive your second dose as planned.

What if I am worried about side effects?

If you have recently had your first vaccine dose and are experiencing any side effects that you are worried about, I can book an appointment for you to see your doctor.

I'm booked in for my first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, what do I do?

If you are an adult aged under 50 years, you should only receive a first dose of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine where the benefit of receiving the vaccine clearly outweighs the risk in your individual circumstance. You may wish to discuss your individual benefit-to-risk balance with your doctor.

Generally, if you have not already received a first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, then the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is preferred in adults aged under 50 years.

Information about how to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine will be available on the Department of Health website shortly.

If you would like to talk about this with your doctor, I can make an appointment for you now.

If you are 50 years of age or older, you can still receive your AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.