



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care

Ref No: MC24-017958

Mr Eddie Smith
Shire President
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Dear Mr Smith

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 November 2024 to the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP regarding current COVID-19 vaccination information. The Minister has asked me to reply.

The Department of Health and Aged Care and state and territory health departments recommend regular vaccination as the safest and most effective protection against illness from COVID-19. COVID-19 is still circulating in the community and is highly contagious. The symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild to severe. Some people recover easily while others get very sick. Government advice is based on clinical trials and real-world data which show that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe illness and hospitalisation due to COVID-19.

All vaccines approved for use in Australia have been thoroughly evaluated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for safety, quality and efficacy (that the vaccine can do what it says it will). When evaluating a vaccine, TGA considers all of its ingredients and vaccines must be manufactured in a licensed or approved facility in accordance with strict manufacturing requirements. All vaccines must be approved by the TGA before they can be supplied in Australia.

Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations gives people the best protection. People are recommended to receive a primary course of COVID-19 vaccination and then regular COVID-19 vaccines. A 'primary' course of vaccination is the first time a person receives a COVID-19 vaccine. Most people now only need one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine as their primary course. Others may need two doses if they are at high risk of severe illness.

Regular COVID-19 vaccinations, also known as 'boosters', are recommended for people to maintain their protection against the symptoms of COVID-19. Boosters are especially important for anyone aged 65 years or older and people at higher risk of severe COVID-19.

Healthy people aged 18 to 64 years are eligible for a free booster every 12 months. Those aged 65 to 74 years are recommended to consider a free booster every 12 months and are eligible for one every 6 months. People aged 75 years or older are recommended to receive free boosters every 6 months. Boosters are not recommended for healthy people aged under 18 years.

People who have medical conditions that increase their risk of severe illness from COVID-19 may be eligible or recommended to have boosters every 6 or 12 months depending on their personal circumstances.

People are encouraged to discuss vaccine options with their trusted health professional. There is also the booster eligibility tool on the Department of Health and Aged Care website to assist people to determine if and when they are recommended to receive a COVID-19 booster.

Carnarvon council and your residents can find more information about COVID-19 vaccines, including the booster eligibility tool and service finder, at health.gov.au/covid-19-vaccines. Should you or your community have additional questions about COVID-19 vaccinations or current recommendations, these can be sent to immunisation.enquiries@health.gov.au.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely



David Laffan
Assistant Secretary
National Immunisation Division

4 December 2024