

Riverstone Family Medical Practice

February, 2023 - Update



Covid Vaccination Update

From 20/02/2023 ATAGI has made the following recommendations for a COVID-19 booster dose:

- All adults aged **65 years and over**, and adults aged **18-64 years** who have medical comorbidities that increase their risk of severe COVID-19, should receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose if their last COVID-19 vaccine dose or confirmed infection (whichever is the most recent) was 6 months ago or longer, and regardless of the number of prior doses received.
- **Adults aged 18-64 years** without risk factors for severe COVID-19 and **children and adolescents aged 5-17 years** who have medical comorbidities that increase their risk of severe COVID-19, should **consider** a booster dose if their last COVID-19 vaccine dose or confirmed infection (whichever is the most recent) was 6 months ago or longer, and regardless of the number of prior doses received.
- ATAGI advises that a booster dose is **not recommended** at this time for **children and adolescents aged under the age of 18** who do not have any risk factors for severe COVID-19.



Reduce your risk

Unfortunately **COVID-19 is still around** and 51 people in NSW died of COVID-19 in the week up to 16/02/2023. From 1/01/2022 to 30/11/2022 3,928 people died of COVID-19 in NSW compared to 288 people who died on the road. While the majority of people who died of COVID-19 were older, some younger people also lost their lives to COVID-19.

Vaccination is the best way to reduce your risk of contracting COVID-19 and provides better protection than natural infection. With so many variants that are now circulating keeping your vaccinations up-to-date is important for maximising your immunity. There are a number of different vaccinations now available. The current bivalent vaccinations provide protection against circulating Omicron variants.



Even if you feel that you do not need a vaccination please consider that there are many vulnerable people in the community who you may have contact with. The more people that are vaccinated, the less likely a major wave will be as there are fewer people for the virus to infect and those who are infected tend to be less infectious if fully vaccinated. You never know if the person that you are standing next to in a shop or any indoor venue is immunosuppressed or has close contact with a person who is at risk of severe disease. Being up-to-date with your vaccination not only protects you but protects others, including those at risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19.

Vaccine Safety

Over 13 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccinations have been given world-wide and the World Health Organisation has been monitoring safety and effectiveness of vaccination since the program began. For more information on the safety of COVID-19 vaccinations see this link. <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/safety-of-covid-19-vaccines>.

Vaccine Technology



Some COVID-19 vaccines have been developed using messenger RNA (mRNA). The mRNA vaccine technology has been studied for over a decade, including in the development of vaccines for Zika, rabies and influenza. **These mRNA vaccines have been rigorously assessed for safety**, and clinical trials have shown that they provide a long-lasting immune response. mRNA vaccines are not live virus vaccines and do not interfere with human DNA. For more information on mRNA vaccines, see WHO's explainer on the different types of COVID-19 vaccines. <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/the-race-for-a-covid-19-vaccine-explained>.



Practice Hours: Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, Saturdays 8am to 1pm
For After Hours Care we recommend the national Home Doctor Service for home visits, contact on 13 74 25 (13 SICK)