Update for immunisation providers

COVID-19 vaccine NIP transition

From 1 October 2026, COVID-19 vaccines will transition to the National Immunisation Program and eligibility for funded COVID-19 vaccines will be updated to focus on people at highest risk of severe disease.

health.gov.au/immunisation

Key points

- From 1 October 2026, COVID-19 vaccines will be funded under the National Immunisation Program (NIP), replacing the stand-alone National COVID-19 Vaccine Program (NCVP) established during Australia's COVID-19 pandemic response.
- Under the NIP, funded COVID-19 vaccines will no longer be available as a universal program. Instead, states and territories will manage ordering, distribution, reporting and program support for COVID-19 vaccines under the NIP, in line with routine processes used for other NIP vaccines.
- Funded access will be available for eligible groups at highest risk of severe disease, consistent with existing COVID-19 vaccination recommendations.
- Free COVID-19 vaccines will be available under the NIP for:
    - all adults aged 75 years and over (one dose every 6 months)
    - adults aged 65–74 years (one dose every 12 months)
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50–74 years (one dose every 12 months)
    - all adults aged 18 years and over with severe immunocompromise (one dose every 12 months).
- People who are not eligible for a funded COVID-19 vaccine may choose to purchase the vaccine privately based on a risk-benefit discussion with their healthcare provider.
- Comprehensive information and resources to support the transition will be released before 1 October 2026.
- **Current arrangements until 1 October 2026**: Until 1 October 2026, COVID-19 vaccines remain available under the current NCVP arrangements. Providers should continue to offer COVID-19 vaccination in line with existing program arrangements and clinical recommendations.

Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

National Immunisation Program
A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Initiative

What will change

From 1 October 2026, COVID-19 vaccines will be funded through the NIP, replacing the stand-alone NCVP established under emergency measures during Australia's COVID-19 pandemic response.

Under the NIP, eligibility for funded COVID-19 vaccines will change, with free COVID-19 vaccines available only to people at highest risk of severe disease:

- all adults aged 75 years and over (one dose every 6 months)
- adults aged 65–74 years (one dose every 12 months)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50–74 years (one dose every 12 months)
- all adults aged 18 years and over with severe immunocompromise (one dose every 12 months).

This means some people who were able to access funded COVID-19 vaccines under the NCVP may no longer be eligible once the NCVP ends.

People who are not eligible for a funded COVID-19 vaccine may choose to purchase the vaccine privately based on a risk-benefit discussion with their healthcare provider.

From 1 October 2026, providers will access and order COVID-19 vaccines through the same arrangements used for other NIP vaccines. NIP vaccine ordering, distribution, reporting and program support are managed by state and territory health departments.

Why the change is occurring

Australia's COVID-19 context has changed. The NCVP was established under emergency arrangements to support broad access to COVID-19 vaccines during the pandemic response when most people had little or no immunity against the disease. COVID-19 is now endemic in Australia and continues to disproportionately affect certain populations.

Based on current evidence and the changed epidemiology, the vaccination program will focus on maintaining protection against severe COVID-19 in those most at risk. COVID-19 vaccines will now transition to the NIP, which is Australia's established program for nationally funded vaccines.

What should I do before 1 October 2026?

Until 1 October 2026, COVID-19 vaccines remain available under the current NCVP arrangements.

Please continue to recommend and administer COVID-19 vaccines in accordance with the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

Comprehensive information coming

This is an initial update to support early awareness. Comprehensive resources to support this transition will be made available to immunisation providers before 1 October 2026. These will include information on:

- updated COVID-19 vaccination recommendations and funding eligibility
- ordering and accessing COVID-19 vaccines through state and territory arrangements
- guidance on cold chain breach and vaccine administration error reporting
- available support for providers and the community for the transition.

Clinical recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination are being finalised and the COVID-19 chapter of the Australian Immunisation Handbook will be updated for the program change on 1 October.