



Talking to patients about AstraZeneca vaccine

Information current as of 21 May 2021

What you need to know about the AstraZeneca Vaccine

- The **AstraZeneca** vaccine is prioritised for people aged 50 and over. The AstraZeneca vaccine requires two doses, given 12 weeks apart.
- **Recent reports** indicate the relative effectiveness of the AstraZeneca vaccine against symptomatic infection is up to 90% after two doses spaced 12 weeks apart.
- There are **emerging reports** that suggest those who have received the AstraZeneca vaccine are less likely to transmit the virus to others.
- Adults under the age of 50 years have a potentially higher risk of **thrombosis with thrombocytopenia** syndrome (TTS) following AstraZeneca vaccination than those aged 50 years and over.
- For people aged 50 years and over, the expert medical advice is that the **benefit of receiving the vaccination outweighs the risk** of this rare but serious side-effect.
- Experts are continuously reviewing the benefit versus risk profile of both the AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines. If Australia was faced with a large outbreak, the current advice on the preferred usage of AstraZeneca and Pfizer may be reviewed.
- The number of Australian cases of TTS suggests it is very rare, but occurs slightly more often in younger people than older people.
- An alternative to the AstraZeneca vaccine is preferred for people under 50 years old.
- No other risk factors for this syndrome have been detected.
- The AstraZeneca vaccine is not recommended for people with a past history of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, heparin-induced thrombocytopenia, idiopathic splanchnic vein thrombosis and anti-phospholipid syndrome with thrombosis.
- The AstraZeneca vaccine is contraindicated for people with anaphylaxis to a previous dose of AstraZeneca vaccine, TTS following the first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine and, other serious adverse events attributed to the first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine.
- In addition, what we know about TTS treatments and diagnosis has vastly improved. The number of people successfully treated for this side effect has risen as critical care specialists and haematologists get a better understanding of what is occurring at a microscopic level with TTS.

Where to get more information:

- [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)
- **National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) COVID-19 vaccines: Frequently asked questions**