



Vaccine Update #466 – AIR policy update, new aged care act messaging, immunisation education opportunities

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) policy: update to childhood pneumococcal schedule rule changes

Children who received their third dose of the pneumococcal vaccine before 11 months of age are now showing as overdue in the AIR for their 12-month pneumococcal booster vaccine. This is clinically correct and aligns with the recommendations in the National Immunisation Catch-up Calculator (NICC).

To address this, the catch-up schedule table in the Australian Immunisation Handbook has been updated to align with AIR rules and the NICC. Services Australia has issued letters to families whose children are now showing as 'not up to date' for their 12-month pneumococcal dose.

To minimise any potential impact on family assistance payments, an extension has been granted. Affected families now have until 31 December 2025 to ensure their child receives the recommended booster vaccine.

For more information see AIR national due and overdue rules.

Introduction of the New Aged Care Act: Key messages

With the introduction of the new Aged Care Act 2024 on 1 November 2025 and end of year fast approaching, the Department of Health Disability and Aged Care has prepared key messaging to:

1. increase awareness and encourage COVID-19 vaccinations in aged care ahead of the festive season.
2. increase awareness and understanding of residential aged care provider obligations to provide vaccine access for residents and staff.

To ensure clear and consistent messaging, please share the following when advising or preparing your own communications with your consumers, the aged care sector and community pharmacists.

Key Messages

Overarching- applicable for all groups

Vaccines are the best protection of serious illness and hospitalisation in older people. From 1 November 2025, the new Aged Care Act 2024 strengthened the requirement for residential aged care providers to provide access to recommended vaccinations for their residents. This includes vaccines such as influenza, COVID-19, shingles and pneumococcal.

The Western Australia Immunisation schedule outlines which vaccines an individual is eligible to receive for free in WA and when.

As we approach the festive season, it's important to make sure aged care residents and staff keep up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination, as cases normally increase over this period. COVID-19 vaccines are free and recommended:

- every 6 months for people aged 75 and over
- every 12 months for people aged 65 to 74
- every 12 months for adults who are severely immunocompromised.

It is recommended to have the COVID-19 vaccine even if you've recently had COVID-19 disease.

Key messages for consumers

Residential aged care homes are communal environments where infections can spread quickly.

Vaccination helps:

- minimise transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases
- protect residents, staff, visitors, and the broader community from vaccine preventable disease and their complications.

For more details, you can refer to the fact sheet COVID-19 vaccination information for residents of aged care homes.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2025

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.

You can use your immunisation history statement to see what immunisations you've had, as well as those that are due or overdue. Guidance on how to get your immunisation history statement is available at Service Australia.

For further information about the new Aged Care Act, please refer to the department's website.

Key messages for the aged care sector

Aged Care Providers are responsible for:

- timely **access** to recommended vaccines for residents and workers, in line with the National Immunisation Program Schedule
- **integrating** vaccination planning into routine clinical care
- **maintaining** accurate records of vaccination status, consent, and exemptions
- **upholding** robust infection prevention and control (IPC) practices
- **promoting** the benefits of vaccines for residents and workers.

Key actions:

- Facility and clinical managers can apply for access to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) to:
 - track who is due or overdue for vaccination
 - ensure accurate reporting of a person's vaccination status.

More information can be found on this Information Sheet. There are also a range of eLearning modules and infographic sheets available on the Services Australia AIR eLearning website.

- Organise access for GPs, pharmacists or accredited immunisers for vaccinations
 - arrange consent early
 - book clinics well in advance
 - if needed, contact your Primary Health Network (PHN) for support.

For further information about the new Aged Care Act, please refer to the department's website.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2025

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.

Key messages for Pharmacists

Pharmacists participating in the COVID-19 Vaccination in Community Pharmacy (CVCP) Program and National Immunisation Program Vaccinations in Pharmacy (NIPVIP) Program can administer and claim for COVID-19 and NIP vaccines in a pharmacy setting, as well as for off-site vaccinations in residential aged care and disability homes. The NIP vaccines that can be administered by pharmacies are determined by state and territory legislation. Specific eligibility and other requirements can be found in the respective Program Rules available on the Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) website.

Reminder for upcoming webinar: Changes to the WA Immunisation Schedule

The Communicable Disease Control Directorate (CDCD) Immunisation Program is hosting a webinar this Thursday 20th November from 1pm – 2pm AWST covering important changes to the WA Immunisation Schedule. This session will focus on updates related to pneumococcal and RSV vaccines. Professor Paul Effler and Professor Chris Blyth will provide insights into the rationale behind the changes and implications for immunisation providers. Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email from with a meeting link that you can save in your calendar. The webinar will be recorded for those who cannot attend on the day.

[Register here](#)

Immunisation education opportunities

As immunisation providers, staying informed and up-to-date on new research and innovations, current immunisation programs, the latest practices and guidelines is essential to delivering safe and effective care.

Whether you're looking for information about your education requirements, online learning, immunisation event recordings and presentations, the WA Health Immunisation Education webpage is your go-to resource.

Why check in regularly?

- New events are added throughout the year
- Topics cover clinical updates, vaccine safety, cold chain management, and more
- Opportunities for networking and peer learning

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2025

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.

We encourage all providers to bookmark the page to ensure you don't miss out on valuable learning opportunities.

Body Copy (Arial 12pt) consuliu mene firtique dem nium octam, quideordium es! Vivissu vivis. Erei sesi pulosul veresime prios vistris, quium tastissa tati, videm deatust runtia nondam fuit fatrarit? Sima, quidenatuus, norei inatio, novis parbem Patatus, Ti.

Classification:

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2025

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.

health.wa.gov.au

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2025

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.

health.wa.gov.au