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Strengthening general practice in WA

# COVID-19 Vaccine

## Stock Governance Guide



# COVID-19 Vaccine Stock Governance Guide

*This guide provides details on how to ensure appropriate planning and responsibilities to run efficient vaccination clinics. Please check the contents to determine if you have considered all the information contained or read the guide for greater detail.*

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## Introduction

This resource is designed to be used as a guide to support your practice with COVID-19 vaccine stock governance. Stock governance is a set of processes to facilitate maximal uptake of vaccines with minimal wastage. Processes include booking system management, audits, clinic schedule design and cold chain management all underpinned by assigned roles and responsibilities in the team.

This resource is designed to be used as a live (online) document. Once printed the hyperlinks will no longer function, impeding the usability of the resource.

## Clinic Scheduling Design for optimised vaccine usage

### Steps to creating an optimal vaccination schedule

Due to the multi-dose vial delivery of the COVID -19 vaccinations, booked clinics (as opposed to ad-hoc administration of the vaccine) are the most efficient mode of delivery. When creating a clinic there are many considerations. A good clinic is one that is simple to understand and manage for vaccinators, receptionists, and patients.

#### Step 1: Clinic resource consideration

Before planning how many vaccinations you want to supply, check on some of your practice key resources. Plan for your clinics to be sustainable and designed not for the short-term but to run for months or potentially years. Considerations could include:

- Human Resources (HR): What HR resources can you sustainably provide to the clinics with minimal impact on your other services?
- Cost: Ensure that your clinics are financially sustainable.
- Space: Where will you be able to provide these vaccinations? You must have an area that meets the **COVID-19 vaccine clinic requirements**. Keeping in mind the space may be compromised by social distancing and pre and post vaccine waiting times.
- Time: What times are best to host your clinics so that there are fewer impacts on other services and on infection control management.
- Demand: How many patients are you going to need to vaccinate? Who else will be vaccinating in your locality?

Plan for sustained clinics that can run in line with your usual services

#### Step 2: Clinic scheduling design

How many vaccinations spots should you open in a clinic for optimal vaccine use?

Once you have worked out your key resources and limitations, discuss with your clinicians what is a safe and reasonable time allocation for your vaccinators to consent and vaccinate. You can then calculate how many vaccines you can deliver over a fixed period.

*Example using Pfizer adult vaccines with 6 doses per vial: You may decide that 2 nurses with a GP can deliver 8 vaccines per 15 minutes. So, a clinic of three hours will equate to 96 doses.*

Only open appointments for the specific number of vaccinations at hand. No need to reserve vaccines for subsequent doses.

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## Guide

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Open clinics with consideration to the number of doses you can administer per vial.

Vaccine stock is delivered in multi-dose vials. Once open, the vials must be used within a certain timeframe (the expiry time varies depending on the vaccine brand being used). When designing a clinic, calculate the number to determine how many people you will see in a clinic.

*Example: In the example above, 96 doses will be required (16 vials) to be drawn up. Therefore, only open 96 appointment slots. If you need to increase the number of appointments in the clinic, increase it by 6 appointments at a time to minimise vaccine wastage.*

**Managing stock for second dose vaccination appointments.**

All COVID-19 vaccinations require a minimum of 2 doses. There are multiple ways that a practice can schedule two doses. Whatever system you choose, make sure it is easy to use and never allow your bookings to exceed the number of vaccines you will have in stock.

CVAS ordering is designed to help you plan for first and second doses. Your first order allocation is half of your subsequent orders for this reason. I.e. you can order up to 300 doses in the first order and up to 600 in your subsequent orders to allow for the second doses of your prior first dose clinics.

Suggestions for clinic schedules:

**Example 1: Separate first and second dose clinics**

On Mondays vaccinate first doses and on Friday's vaccinate second doses /or morning clinics first doses and afternoons can be second doses / or one week is first doses and the other is second doses. In this way your clinic has the capacity to book a patient for both doses on first contact, giving the patient confidence they are booked for their second dose while you will know exactly how much stock is needed each week for all doses. We have created a **Stock Control Spreadsheet** to assist you in planning your weekly dose allocations.

If possible, group third dose and booster dose appointments together in allocated clinics or times within those clinics or dedicate a whole clinic to third doses/ booster.

**Benefits:** Easy to book for your receptionists. Increase your vaccinators efficiency as they know what doses they are vaccinating ahead of time. Easy for stock management. More likely to receive the PIP as both doses are booked at the same time.

**Limitations:** Harder to organise on your practice management software, requires tighter management. Harder to mirror on online software. Restricts patients to some degree to when they can have their vaccines.

**Example 2: Mixed 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> dose/booster clinics**

Clinics are booked every week and the total number of appointments in those clinics match your weekly dose allocations. Appointments are made for all dose intervals in the one clinic.

If you decide to mix dose 1 and dose 2 appointments in the one clinic, then colour coding the appointment book or having different appointment book icons can assist with identification.

**Benefits:** Easy to set up in appointment books and online bookings. Appointments times are more flexible for patients to access.

**Limitations:** People booking second doses may find it hard to find an appointment when they are due as they may already be taken up by first dose bookings. Potentially not as efficient for admin staff to be able to book. Vaccinator efficiency reduced as not aware ahead of time what dose scheduling the patient is on. The practice can potentially miss out on PIP by not completing the two doses.

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### Step 3: Dose ordering

Now that you know about your available resources, time, space and how many doses a week you will need, you are now in the position to easily manage your stock ordering via CVAS.

### Vaccination booking tips and tricks

**Key Focus: Make your booking process easy to manage for staff, vaccinators, and patients.**

To assist with vaccination bookings, make it visually easy for your receptionist to see what is available.

- Only open appointments for the specific number of vaccinations allocated to that clinic. This can prevent overbooking.
- You may consider speaking to your software vendor for set up options to enhance ease of usage. For example, in Best Practice Software you can allocate a separate “layout” for COVID-19 vaccines and enhance visibility in the appointment books with having one patient booking per column.
- Use confirmation tools in your medical software or online booking provider to help confirm attendance. Create processes of how to follow up those that have not confirmed.
- Look at separating first and second dose clinics for ease of bookings. See example 1 of Clinic scheduling design.
- Mirror your medical software bookings with your online booking systems, contact your online booking provider to find out how to best to do this.
- Use different icons or colours in your appointment book to help differentiate the doses and types of vaccines

### Managing fluctuations in vaccine uptake and cancellations

#### Demand Fluctuations

Managing vaccines when there is a high demand for vaccines can be easier in comparison to a low demand for vaccine. Sudden low demand in vaccine can incur wastage. Be prepared to be dynamic in this space<sub>1</sub>, constantly monitor trends in your future bookings and listen to advice from state and federal government about vaccine uptake.

A good indicator that you have the right balance of vaccines to patient demand is to be fully booked for the week ahead with some bookings moving into the following week. If your vaccine appointments show a decline employ some booking utilisation processes such as:

- reduce the amount of availability
- combine separate clinics
- shorten clinics
- bring forward booking into the next clinic where suitable

Regularly audit your vaccination appointments to monitor stock usage.

Aim to use your workforce, time, and space efficiently, so that you can redeploy your staff back into standard clinic duties. If you have a decrease in demand you may also need to reduce or skip your next vaccine order. Use your dose monitoring tools to adjust what you will be ordering in the future.

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## Cancellations

**Key Focus: Managing your cancellations well will enhance your clinic efficiency, increase patient and practitioner satisfaction, and minimise stock wastage.**

Considerations could include:

- Consider utilising SMS reminders as an effective way to confirm or cancel to ensure accuracy of clinics prior to vaccine draw up.
- Practice’s policy on cancellation: if you have one and it is applicable use it and ensure that it is clearly communicated with patients at the time of booking.
- Have processes in place so that your admin team know where to go and what to do to fill appointment gaps when you have cancelled appointments. Make someone or a group of people accountable for this to action.
- Create a cancellation list that all admin staff can work from if appointments need filling.
- Bring forward patients from future bookings into the clinic (ensuring that minimal intervals between vaccinations have been met).

Where possible, allow for online cancellation to help avoid “no shows”. Allowing patients to be able to cancel will enable you to identify vacant appointments that you can fill or adjust for. Consider allowing cancellations with a short time restriction (i.e. 1 hour before the clinic) which may reduce vaccine wastage.

## Key roles and responsibilities for vaccine stock control

Vaccine ordering, clinic scheduling and auditing is a complicated process. It is important to establish clear lines of communication and clear roles and responsibilities to reduce error.

Assign roles to individuals within the practice to ensure someone is allocated to each part of the process

Suggested roles could include:

- **Vaccine Clinic Planner:** Responsible for planning the COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Identify how many patients can be booked for each clinic, looking at workforce and resources available. Communicates to the Vaccine Ordering role on how many doses are required and when. Refer to the **Stock Control Spreadsheet** template in appendix.
- **Vaccine Ordering:** Responsible for ordering COVID-19 vaccines and communication with CVAS, including completing reports in CVAS. Receives communication from the clinic planner/s and communicates with all roles on when the vaccine order was placed, number of vaccines ordered and expected delivery date.
- **Booking Utilisation:** Responsible for assessing booking utilisation and communicating any identified issues. Will implement booking utilisation process within the practice.
- **Cold Chain Manager:** Responsible for ensuring that all team members are aware and trained in cold chain management as required. For example, are staff aware of what to do when receiving temperature-controlled items and how to send back any coolers. Responsible for reporting any vaccine wastage as per guidelines.

Ensure your practice team is aware of your cold chain manager and responsible persons.

These roles are likely to sit with management and nurse management. There does not need to be a separate person for each role and one person can adopt multiple roles where suitable.

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## Vaccine Ordering *(updated)*

### How to place your order

To place your order for vaccines you must do this through the COVID-19 vaccine administration system (CVAS). The CVAS can be accessed [here](#).

Should you require assistance within CVAS please contact [VOC](#).

CVAS is regularly updated to improve functionality, so will vary slightly over time.

CVAS allows providers to order less than the maximum allocated doses, in multiples of 100 /120 doses (dependant on vaccine type). This will allow you additional flexibility to order the number of vaccines you require based on work force capacity and local demand up to your maximum allocation.

The regular ordering and delivery cycle will remain the same, so deliveries will still be made fortnightly in line with your cycle.

Please remember that you do not need to place an order every week/fortnight (based on your ordering cycle). Please only place an order when you need to, however be mindful of the ordering cycles and the delivery windows within that cycle.

Ensure that you allow a grace period for delivery of at least 48 hours from the expected delivery prior to your first clinic bookings that are dependent on the incoming stock.

Stock management forms must be submitted within CVAS prior to 9pm each Friday. You will not be able to place an additional order if you have not submitted your stock management form.

### Ordering strategies for your practice

Ensure that you order vaccine stock in line with your capacity to vaccinate within your work force and clinic considerations.

When ordering:

- Check what your maximum and minimum allocations are and work within those boundaries.
- Work into your planning the stock expiry dates. With Pfizer vaccines the thawed expiry day (31 days post thawing) is the most crucial. This helps ensure that you are not left with expired stock. The thawed expiry date supersedes the vaccine expiry date.

### Limitations

Ordering to your booking capacity does limit your ability to accept walk-in or ad hoc patients.

Do Not:

- stockpile vaccines
- reserve second doses for patients who have had a first dose.

Instead, [manage your bookings](#) to use up all stock on hand where possible.

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## Stock Redistribution

Despite best efforts in stock management, practices occasionally will have a need for additional stock, or may have excess stock on hand that is at risk of expiring.

WA Primary Health Alliance has supported practices with COVID-19 stock redistribution requests to minimise stock wastage, being one of the only PHN's to support primary care with this activity.

As from April 2022 the Commonwealth Department of Health has implemented a national procedure to streamline redistribution requests and as such WA Primary Health Alliance has transitioned WA practices over to this process.

The redistribution process is as follows:

### To Transfer Out Stock

- Contact the Vaccine Operations Centre to advise them of the practices excess stock and lodge a 'Transfer Request'. VOC will create a transfer request case and use this to redistribute the excess vaccines where possible to nearby sites.
- You can reach the VOC at [covid19vaccineoperationscentre@health.gov.au](mailto:covid19vaccineoperationscentre@health.gov.au) or 1800 318 208.

### To Obtain Stock

- Submit an additional order request via CVAS ordering portal.
- Please note approval for extra stock will be dependent on the Commonwealth approval based on your current stock level.
- We encourage you not to commit these vaccines to appointments until your order has been confirmed by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

Alternatively, a practice can redistribute and transfer stock using local contacts. See [Transfer of COVID-19 vaccines and offsite vaccinations](#).

If you require a smaller quantity of stock than your minimum dose or do not require a large quantity of stock it would be beneficial to reach out to other local participating practices or pharmacies.

## Wastage Mitigation

### Cold Chain Management

Your practice will need to have written **procedures and protocols** in place for the following. Review the following guidelines against your procedures. In line with your COVID-19 vaccine site readiness you will need to have written policies available to support your clinic and to provide as evidence if requested by the Department of Health Vaccination Task Force.

### Receiving vaccines

Specific procedures should be in place associated with receipt of vaccine doses including unloading, acceptance, temperature checks, inspection, unpacking and storage, to ensure compliance with the [Vaccine Acceptance Checklist](#) and initial vaccine site readiness agreement.

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Specific procedures should be in place to be able to notify the **VOC** immediately in connection with defective doses or any of the matters specified in the **Vaccine Acceptance Checklist**. Define who is to be notified in your workplace. Note the responsibility of that team members role is call the Vaccine Operations Centre on 1800 318 208 (stating that the vaccine came from a DHL cooler) and then provide this **Vaccine Acceptance Checklist** by email with an explanation of the issue and attaching any photographs to **[COVID19VaccineAcceptance@health.gov.au](mailto:COVID19VaccineAcceptance@health.gov.au)**.

### Storage of vaccines

Documented management procedure describing the quality processes to ensure the safe, secure, stock rotation and appropriate storage of vaccine doses as per the **Strive for 5 guidelines**.

An inventory management system for recording of vaccine stock, product control, expiry date management, use and **recording any wastage** including the reasons for the wastage occurring, as required to be reported through CVAS.

Appropriate procedures should be in place to ensure storage and handling of the vaccine doses in accordance with the vaccine stability timelines and other storage instructions as outlined by **ATAGI** provided by Department of Health.

### Correct use of vaccines

Practice must ensure that all staff associated with the administration of COVID-19 vaccines are suitably trained and have completed the specific **COVID-19 Vaccine Training** modules, including additional Western Australian COVID-19 vaccination training requirements.

The practice requires a documented procedure in place for managing and recording training of all staff handling vaccine doses to ensure that vaccines are handled in a safe and lawful manner, including training relating to safe removal of vials from ultra-low temperature shippers and freezers and compliance with any safety data sheets provided with the doses.

A documented procedure in place for complying with the vaccine preparation and administration instructions provided by the Australian Government. Further information can be found in **HealthPathways WA**.

### Draw up of vaccines

ATAGI's **multi-dose vial guidance** applies to the AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna and Novavax vaccines and covered by **COVID-19 Vaccine Training** modules.

# Transfer of COVID-19 vaccines and offsite vaccinations

## Transfer of COVID-19 vaccines between participating primary care vaccination sites

The Department of Health has provided some [guidance and supporting documents](#) regarding transfer of stock. Doses can be transferred between participating COVID-19 vaccination program sites to meet demand or manage excess stock.

Both the receiving site and the transferring site must record the transfer details in their vaccine stock management report by 9 pm every Friday.

Both sites must be enabled for that vaccine type (including signing the relevant site readiness declaration) and agree to the transport arrangements, including:

- sending the appropriate number of consumables (syringes, needles, and sharps collectors)
- maintaining cold-chain storage.

## Offsite vaccinations

Commonwealth Vaccination Clinics and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services can administer vaccines offsite at pop-up clinics, drive-through clinics, in-reach and out-reach clinics, and in-home visits.

Please refer to the information from the Department of Health on [Offsite Vaccinations](#).

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## Key Contacts

### Practice Assist

1800 2 ASSIST (1800 2 ASSIST (277 478)

[practiceassist@wapha.org.au](mailto:practiceassist@wapha.org.au)

Note: The Practice Assist operating hours are 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

### Vaccine Operations Centre (VOC)

1800 318 208

[COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@health.gov.au](mailto:COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@health.gov.au)

Note: The VOC operating hours are between 5 am - 6pm Monday to Thursday. 5am -7pm Fridays and 6am -5pm Saturday / Sunday (AWST).

## Key Resources

### COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout Key Resources and Contact Details for General Practice

Resource available from Practice Assist [here](#).

### HealthPathways WA

HealthPathways WA is a secure, online portal that includes information and resources to support GPs for COVID-19 vaccination.

Access HealthPathways WA [here](#).

For login details, please email [healthpathways@wapha.org.au](mailto:healthpathways@wapha.org.au). Please note that access is restricted to health professionals only and not to be circulated or shared with the general public.

### COVID-19 Vaccination Training Program

All authorised COVID-19 vaccination providers **must** complete the COVID-19 vaccination training program prior to administering COVID-19 vaccines. The training is regularly updated, and all practitioners are encouraged to log back into the training platform regularly to review the latest advice.

You can access the COVID-19 vaccination training [here](#).

For additional Western Australian COVID-19 vaccination training requirements see [WA Department of Health](#).

### Department of Health

Find information about vaccine storage and handling requirements, clinical considerations for eligible patients, clinical advice about rare side effects, and resources to use in your practice.

[COVID-19 vaccination advice for vaccine providers](#)

### National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5'

The National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5', provides information and advice for vaccine storage management for Australian immunisation service providers. Access [here](#).

### Cold Chain and Vaccine Potency Policy and Procedures template

A practice Assist resource available [here](#).

## Appendix

[Stock Control Spreadsheet template](#)

[Vaccine Acceptance Checklist template](#)

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