

Practice Connect

Latest news and updates

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COVID-19 Primary Care Vaccine Rollout – VaccinateWA

The VaccinateWA COVID-19 vaccination booking system is open for appointments and can be accessed at [Roll up for WA](#).

Bookings are open for people eligible under Phase 1b. This includes general practice staff and younger adults with specified underlying medical conditions and people with disabilities, as part of the Phase 1B cohort. Please refer to the [Vaccine Eligibility Checker](#) to confirm eligibility.

When booking online, search results will display relevant clinics and dates based on the information entered by the user, along with the recommended vaccine and timing between doses.

Selected clinics - starting with Claremont Showgrounds in early June - will soon start providing the Pfizer vaccine to eligible people aged under 50 on Thursdays to Sundays each week, strictly by bookings only via 13 COVID (13 26843) or via the online booking system at [Roll up for WA](#).

FAQ's for VaccinateWA can be found [here](#).



Good News Story: Yarning session and kangaroo stew calm COVID-19 vaccine anxiety at Nidjalla Waangan Mia

A yarning session and some kangaroo stew provided the perfect relaxed surroundings to discuss concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine with clients at Nidjalla Waangan Mia on May 12.

WA Primary Health Alliance joined forces with practice staff, two service providers and well-known local Dr William Walker at Nidjalla Waanga Mia to host the yarning session.

Thirty Aboriginal community members from Kwinana and from around the Peel region gathered to ask questions and voice their concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

“How many people in the room have had a blood clot?” Dr Walker asked at the beginning of the session.



Local Elder George Walley and Dr William Walker attend the Nidjalla Waangan Mia session



Attendees receive COVID vaccine advice at the recent Nidjalla Waangan Mia session

Seven attendees raised their hands. Dr Walker then asked how many had developed a clot following their COVID-19 vaccination – none had.

Dr Walker used this example to explain to the group how statistically unlikely it is to get a blood clot from the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccination.

Among the group were several clients who had real concerns about the risk of getting a blood clot from the vaccine.

Following the session four clients - fears allayed - immediately booked to have the vaccine that day. Previously, three of them had refused to have the COVID-19 vaccine.

The session was followed by lunch – including warm kangaroo stew and damper.

The attendees from Kwinana also asked for a follow up yarning session for elders who couldn't attend.

Targeted Expression of Interest (EOI) for General Practices (AstraZeneca)

Following the successful onboarding of more than 4,600 primary care vaccination sites between March and April 2021 (including 4,400 general practices), the Commonwealth is further expanding participation in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program through general practices to up to 900 additional sites. The focus of this targeted EOI is for general practices to indicate their interest in joining the COVID-19 Vaccination.

Practices already participating in the COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out do not need to apply through this EOI.

WAPHA will be sending a special communication today to all general practices.

For more information for general practices click [here](#).

Transfer of AstraZeneca Vaccine stock between participating general practices

Practices can now transport AstraZeneca vaccine stock between participating sites, as outlined in the attached policy. Transfers are the responsibility of the sites to manage (e.g. maintain cold-chain, etc.) and must be captured within the weekly Stock Management Report in CVAS (due 9pm Fridays).

The Stock Management Report is currently being updated to allow this and is expected to be updated this week. An email will be sent from CVAS to all participating sites informing them when the update to the report goes live.

For information about this, please refer general practices to [The National Vaccine Storage Guidelines](#) (Strive for 5) for information and advice on vaccine storage, including transportation. Sites should ensure all appropriate requirements for transport are met.

For more information read the Australian Government Department of Health [Transfer of COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccines between participating primary care vaccination sites](#) fact sheet.

COVID-19 Vaccination Training Modules Updated

Updates have occurred to the COVID-19 vaccination training program on Friday 14th May. Module progress and completion have not been affected. You are expected to login and view the new information. A summary of the updates can be found in the announcement forum. All changes within the modules are identified by 'NEW' in red. You can log-in to the training modules [here](#).

Resources for addressing vaccine hesitancy

Australian Government Department of Health has provided a downloadable [Talking to Patients about AstraZeneca Vaccine fact-sheet](#) for GPs to address vaccine hesitancy. These talking points include:

- AstraZeneca vaccine effectiveness
- The low risk of thrombosis with thrombocytopenia occurring following the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The Department has also worked in partnership with the Australian Academy of Science to prepare [The science of immunisation: questions and answers booklet](#). The website also features a series of [short videos and in-depth articles](#) countering vaccine hesitancy.

COVID-19 HealthPathways Updates

The following content updates have now been published on the HealthPathways site:

COVID-19 Assessment and Management:

- Updated Clinical Editor's note to include information around the easing of restrictions, testing, self-isolation and notification requirements

Influenza Immunisation:

- Updated to reflect changes to the 2021 WA Influenza Immunisation Program.

Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccination:

- Updated Clinical Editor's note to include vaccine shared decision -making resources:
 - Weighing Up Potential Benefits Against Risk of Harm from COVID-19 AstraZeneca Vaccine
 - AstraZeneca Vaccine Decision Aid

Newly Localised Pathways

- Perinatal Mental Health Advice

Recently Reviewed Pathways

- Fraudulent Access to Medicines
- Practical Prescribing Guide
- Perinatal Mental Health



To access HealthPathways please email the HealthPathways team at healthpathways@wapha.org.au

BreastScreen WA advises patients not to postpone screening mammograms

BreastScreen WA does not recommend that women delay or reschedule their breast cancer screening mammogram appointments.

The organisation said there is no evidence that COVID-19 or the COVID-19 vaccinations have any adverse effect on the breast tissue. Some recently published medical studies have reported a small incidence of mild lymph gland swelling in the axilla on the side of the inoculation for up to 6 weeks after the vaccination.

BreastScreen WA is asking patients questions about the date, what arm they received the vaccination in and the brand of COVID-19 inoculation, so the consultant radiologist has this information when they interpret the patient's mammogram images.

If you have any queries about this matter, please contact BreastScreen WA's Liaison GP [here](#).

Culturally Diverse Psychological Service

The Culturally Diverse Psychological Service (CDPS) provides structured psychological treatment services for individuals (and their families) from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background with, or at risk of, mental disorders.

The **Primary focus** of this service is the provision of psychological treatment for mild to moderate mental health conditions, with a **secondary focus** on the provision of short-term psychological interventions for people with severe mental illness to access appropriate services.

Service Details for Referring Practitioners

Clients can receive short-term (up to 10 sessions) culturally appropriate and evidence-based psychological intervention. Interpreters can be requested as needed. The service is accessible throughout the Perth metro area and does not incur a fee.

Clients need a general practitioner (GP) referral (preferably with a mental health treatment plan) to access the service.

Psychiatrists and Pediatricians can also refer.

Further information & contact details

For further information on this service please visit the [Life Without Barriers](#) website or view the [Service Details for Medical and Allied Professionals](#) brochure.

Alternatively the service can be contacted on 0418 724 549 or by using the:

Enquiry Email: CaldPsychService@lwb.org.au or;

Referral Email: CaldPsychReferrals@lwb.org.au



Technology brings better health care to one of the most remote communities in the world

In one of the most remote communities in the world, the Aboriginal community of Tjuntjuntjara in Western Australia, telehealth and the use of My Health Record have transformed health care delivery.

Tjuntjuntjara is 650km north east of Kalgoorlie in the Great Victoria Desert in Western Australia. There are about 160 people living at Tjuntjuntjara - they speak a southern variety of the Pitjantjatjara language and identify as belonging to a group of people known as Pilanguru, meaning 'from the spinifex plains.

With the advent of COVID-19 and the closure of the Western Australian border to the Kakarrara Wilurrara Health Alliance (KWAH) planes and health professionals from South Australia, there were no doctors or allied health outreach professionals able to go to Tjuntjuntjara for more than ten months from March 2020 to January 2021.

This is when the digital health provided the answer. With telehealth the clinic is able to continue to have a high level of health care for chronic conditions, preventive activities and mental health issues.

Australian Digital Health Agency CEO Amanda Cattermole said: "For *National Reconciliation Week 2021* we celebrate the success of Aboriginal community-controlled health care delivery in Australia."

In line with this year's theme **More than a word. Reconciliation takes action**, the Agency is promoting the benefits of digital technology to connect even the most isolated Aboriginal communities with first class health care.

Read the full story [here](#).

Support with setting up Telehealth in your practice

For further support with setting up telehealth in your practice, see the [Practice Assist page](#) or contact health@wapha.org.au.

Additionally, the AMA have released the **10 Minimum Standards for Telemedicine**, a set of standards that can be used by practices to help ensure that practices are providing telehealth consultations safely and securely.



Dr Jill Benson delivers telehealth to Tjuntjuntjara from her houseboat on the Murray River



Tjuntjuntjara from the air

Patient immunisation details now more easily available to healthcare providers

Australian healthcare providers now have an improved and consolidated view of their patients' immunisation details through My Health Record.

This is important as the world continues to face the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 and shows how the national digital health system can support the response to both this and future pandemics.

Australian Digital Health Agency Chief Clinical Adviser, Dr Steve Hambleton, said the latest update to the system makes it much easier to see patient immunisation information.

Read the full media release [here](#).

Resources for GPs and consumers available on the NPS MedicineWise website

Heart failure is a serious condition. Early diagnosis of heart failure and effective management keeps people out of hospital and helps them live better, longer lives.

- Heart failure affects 480,000 Australians and is associated with high rates of hospitalisation and mortality. Only 50% of people with heart failure are alive 5 years after diagnosis.
- GPs are ideally placed to diagnose people with heart failure and provide effective treatments that reduce hospitalisations and save lives.
- An echocardiogram is the single most important investigation in heart failure to confirm the diagnosis and classify heart failure.
- ACE inhibitors, heart failure beta blockers and mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists (MRAs) have all been shown to improve patient prognosis.
- People with heart failure can gain substantial benefit from education, self-management including action plans, and referrals such as multidisciplinary services and Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs).



The NPS MedicineWise Educational Visiting topic for GPs delivers content that supports GPs in the early diagnosis and classification of heart failure and provides clinical guidance on initiation and ongoing management of medicines.

The NPS MedicineWise website also provides a suite of materials that can help engage consumers in conversation and empower patients with self-management strategies.

Visit the NPS MedicineWise website [Focus on heart failure page](#) for more information.

Substantial drop in influenza vaccination rates

Data from the Department of Health shows a marked drop in influenza vaccination rates when compared with the same time last year. In 2020 there were 7,453,154 vaccines administered Australia-wide between 1 March – 16 May, compared to 4,732,303 in 2021.

In a Media Statement released by Health Minister Roger Cook, it is stated that Western Australians are being urged to get vaccinated again this year. Amid the focus on COVID-19, people are reminded influenza can also cause serious respiratory illness and that immunisation provides the best protection for all ages. While people should get their seasonal flu vaccine as early as possible to optimise protection over the peak period for influenza infection in WA - typically from July to October - they should avoid getting it within 14 days of a COVID-19 vaccine dose.

Influenza vaccination coverage update for Western Australia as at 23 May 2021:

- 460,963 influenza vaccinations were recorded in the AIR as administered in 2021 (an increase of 71,272 in past week).
- State-wide coverage is 16.5%
- Coverage for children aged **>6 months to <5 years is 7.1%** (7,232 children vaccinated)
- Coverage for adults aged **65 years or older is 46.1%** (180,738 persons vaccinated)
- Coverage among **non-Aboriginal persons is 16.8%**.
- Coverage among **Aboriginal persons is 6.8%**.

Read the Media Statement from Minister for Health Roger Cook [here](#)

Read the Australian Influenza Surveillance Report and Activity Updates [here](#)

New guide: The science of immunisation – common questions answered

The Australian Academy of Science has launched a new guide about the science of immunisation to help counter misinformation and uncertainty surrounding vaccines for COVID-19 and other diseases. NCIRS Director Professor Kristine Macartney and Associate Director Dr Frank Beard contributed to this guide, which answers common questions, including:

- What is immunisation?
- What is in a vaccine?
- Who benefits from vaccines?
- Are vaccines safe?
- What does the future hold for vaccination?

The guide is available online as web content, as a downloadable PDF and in print, and there are short easy-to-understand videos to watch and share.

Read more and access the guide [here](#)

5th Annual Immunisation Coalition Adult Immunisation Forum – Registrations now open



The 5th Adult Immunisation Forum will take place on Monday 28 June 2021 and will be a virtual event due to the ongoing uncertainties with COVID restrictions.

This one-day event run by the Immunisation Coalition is free and will continue to build on the success of their previous forums, aiming:

- To better understand the burden of vaccine preventable diseases in adults
- To build an awareness of the challenges and strategies for improved vaccination in adults
- To hear the latest developments in vaccine programs for adults
- To consider ways of improving knowledge about immunisation best practice

The meeting will be of particular interest to health professionals, immunisation specialists, policy makers and anyone else working on the front line of public health.

This webinar event will include a range of topics:

- COVID-19 update
- Zoster
- Aged care update
- Pneumococcal disease
- Pertussis and other respiratory diseases
- Influenza: Immunity; vaccine effectiveness in the elderly
- Innovations in vaccine design

Presenters and the draft program for this event will be announced soon.

[Register here](#)

Upcoming Event: 17th National Immunisation Conference 2021

The 17th [National Immunisation Conference](#) will be hosted as a virtual conference. In 2021 the conference theme has been updated to 'Immunisation in the COVID pandemic era'.

Date: Tuesday 29 June to Thursday 1 July 2021 **Time:** Various

Learn more and register [here](#)

Upcoming Webinar: Influenza vaccine update – What’s new in 2021?

Wednesday 2 June 2021 - 5:30pm – 7:00pm (WST)
Register at www.whatsnewflu.com.au with access code: FLUN02

- Australia’s first cell-based Influenza vaccine FLUCELVAX® Quad 1
- Why cell-based influenza vaccines?
- Maintaining influenza vaccine coverage in 2021

Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) Annual Statement on Immunisation 2021

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has released a statement on immunisation in Australia. The statement covers key successes, trends and challenges in the use of vaccines and control of vaccine-preventable diseases in 2020. It also signals ATAGI’s priority actions for addressing key issues for 2021 and beyond.

The Statement can be read [here](#).

WAPHA’s GP Innovation Grants

WA Primary Health Alliance GP Innovation Grants have now come to a close.

GP Innovation Grants were available for the purchase of information technology (IT) equipment to participate in virtual programs such as telehealth video consultations, webinars, online meetings and training. Practices were able to purchase IT equipment such as computers, webcam’s, video conferencing set ups, tablets and more.

We would love to know how participating practices utilised the grant to enable improvement in the use of virtual programs.

Please email [Practice Assist](#) or call 1800 2 ASSIST (1800 2 277 478) if you would like to share your practices story!

Health Promotion Events

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month June 2021

June is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month - Bowel Cancer Australia's signature event to raise awareness of **Australia's second deadliest cancer** and funds for the leading community-funded charity dedicated to prevention, early diagnosis, research, quality treatment and the best care for everyone affected by bowel cancer.



Bowel cancer claims the lives of 103 Australians every week (5,336 people a year) - but it's one of the most treatable types of cancer if found early.

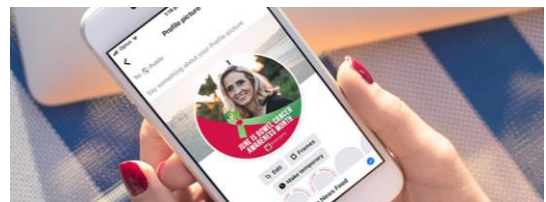
While the risk of bowel cancer increases significantly with age, the disease doesn't discriminate, affecting men and women, young and old.

296 Australians will be diagnosed with bowel cancer this week (15,352 people a year).

Support Bowel Cancer Awareness Month - [register your interest](#), [fundraise](#) and/or [order](#) an awareness pack.

A virtual bowel cancer awareness ribbon

A simple way to help show your support of Bowel Cancer Awareness Month and Red Apple Day is to purchase a [Virtual Bowel Cancer Awareness Ribbon](#).



- **send** a ribbon to someone you know;
- **dedicate** a ribbon in remembrance; or
- **buy** a ribbon to help raise awareness.

The virtual ribbon can also be sent as an eCard and/or pinned to our [virtual apple tree](#).

Alternatively, you can add a virtual Bowel Cancer Awareness Ribbon to your **Facebook profile** picture and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

To activate the frame on your profile simply go to your Facebook page, click on your profile picture.

- For **mobile** click 'Add Frame', search for Bowel Cancer Awareness Month and press save.
- For **desktop** click 'edit' and then 'add frame', search Bowel Cancer Awareness Month and press save.

There is also the option to make the frame 'temporary', which means you can set an end date for when the frame will display on your profile (e.g. 1-30 June).

Coming up soon...	
Schizophrenia Awareness Week	May 23-29
National Palliative Care Week	May 23-29
Kidney Health Week	May 25-31
World MS Day	May 30

Practice Assist Resource Library

As part of our support for general practices, Practice Assist maintains a library of useful resources in our [Practice Assist Resource Library](#). These resources range across different topics from GP Accreditation, Practice Incentives Program, to the latest in resources around COVID-19.

Here are some of our new and updated resources:

Clinical Resources

- Managing Drug Seeking Behaviour ([new](#))

COVID-19 Resources

- COVID-19 Checklist Preparing Patients for vaccination at a different location ([new](#))
- COVID19 Vaccination for Nonparticipating practices ([new](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccination Planning Implementing a vaccination clinic checklist ([new](#))
- Phase 1b COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out through Primary Care Providers – Version 2 updates ([new](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccine Patient Journey Template ([new](#))
- Medicare MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services GPs & OMPs ([updated](#))
- Medicare MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Nurse Practitioners ([updated](#))
- Medicare MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Mental Health ([updated](#))
- Medicare MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Chronic Disease ([updated](#))
- MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Quick Guide GPs ([updated](#))
- MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Quick Guide OMPs ([updated](#))
- MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Quick Guide Nursing & Allied Health ([updated](#))
- MBS COVID-19 Vaccine Suitability Assessment Items ([new](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccination Checklist ([new](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker ([new](#))

Digital Health

- Digital Health Services Fact Sheet ([new](#))
- How to access AIR through My Health Record and find a patient's immunisation history ([new](#))

Medicare

- MBS Items Frequently Used in General Practice Cheat Sheet ([updated](#))
- CDM Allied Health Group Services in RACF's ([new](#))
- CDM ATSI Allied Health in RACF's ([new](#))
- CDM Allied Health in RACF's ([new](#))
- CDM GP or OMP in RACF's ([new](#))
- Mental Health Treatment Plans (MHTPs) in RACFs ([new](#))
- MBS Attendance Items in RACFs Fact Sheet ([new](#))
- MBS Items for Medical Practitioners in 3GA Programs and MDRAP ([new](#))
- Advance Care Planning (ACP) and supporting MBS items ([new](#))

Nurses in General Practice

- Nurses in General Practice ([updated](#))

Programs and National Schemes

- AIR Data Quality User Guide ([new](#))
- AIR 010A Report User Guide ([new](#))
- Supporting and understanding delegations in HPOS to enable access to the Australian Immunisation Register ([new](#))
- Recall and Reminder Letter template for cervical screening and follow-up ([new](#))
- Cervical Screening Flowchart ([new](#))

General Practice Accreditation

- Privacy and Confidentiality Agreements ([updated](#))
- Free Interpreting Services for Medical Practitioners ([new](#))
- Retention and Destruction of Medical Records ([updated](#))
- Clinical Handover Policy Template ([new](#))

If you have an idea for a new resource or feedback on our current resources, please email practiceassist@wapha.org.au with ideas and comments.

Education and training

Visit our Webinars & Workshops page at www.practiceassist.com.au for the events calendar.

Webinars & Workshops

Hepatitis C Nursing

Presented by ASHM
Saturday 29 May

Culturally Diverse Mental Health

Presented by WAAMH
Monday 31 May

GP Pharmacists in General Practice Showcase

Presented by WAPHA
Tuesday 1 June

Treatment options for patients with uncontrolled hypertension

Presented by RACGP
Tuesday 1 June

Little Lungs - A Paediatric Asthma Update (webinar)

Presented by National Asthma Council
Tuesday 1 June

Privacy and Confidentiality for your practice

Presented by AAPM
Thursday 3 June

Trauma Informed Practice

Presented by WAAMH
Thursday 3 June

Introduction to the WA VAD Care Navigator Service

Presented by Cancer Council WA
Tuesday 8 June

Hepatitis B in Primary Care

Presented by RACGP / ASHM
Thursday 10 June

WA Ear and Hearing Telehealth Forum 2021

Presented by Rural Health West & Partners
Friday 11 June

Obstetric Emergencies

Presented by Rural Health West
Friday 11 June

Rural Anaesthesia Down Under Conference 2021

Presented by Rural Health West
Sunday 13 to Wednesday 16 June

Recovery and Recovery Plans

Presented by WAAMH
Thursday 17 June

Regional Cancer Education Series - Kimberley program: Part 1

Presented by Cancer Council
Saturday 19 June

MEDCON21 Inter-College Medical Conference

Presented by AMA & associated sponsors
Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June

Rural Obstetrics and Gynecology Forum 2021

Presented by Rural Health West
Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June

Curing Hepatitis C in Primary Care

Presented by ASHM
Saturday 26 June

Motivational Interviewing in Primary Care:

Improving lifestyle factors in the population one consultation at a time

Presented by RACGP & Ochre
Thursday 1 July

PATHFINDER: Early career GP conference 2021

Presented by RACGP
Saturday 7 August

Cervical Screening for nurses

Presented by Sexual Health Headquarters (SHQ)
24 & 25 August

Education and training (cont)

ACSEP Most Course: Perth August 2021
Presented by SEM Academy
Saturday 28 to Sunday 29 August

2021 Wound Management Workshops: Rural
Presented by Clinical Design Solutions
Multiple dates (rural WA)

Joint Australasian Sexual Health and HIV&AIDS Conferences: VIRTUAL
Presented by ASHM
Monday 6 to Thursday 9 September

Online Training
GP Framework for Child Mental Health Assessment
Presented by Emerging Minds

Diabetes in Practice for Nurses
Presented by Diabetes Qualified

Electronic Prescribing online training
Presented by ADHA

RACGP webinar - Phone and Video consultations
Presented by RACGP

Safety Through Reporting
Presented by Department of Health & TGA

Keeping your practice COVID-safe
Presented by RACGP

High-quality health records to support patient care
Presented by RACGP

Medico-legal concerns and My Health Record
Presented by RACGP

GP Pharmacists in General Practice – End of Program Showcase

Tuesday 1 June | 5.00pm to 6.30pm

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) commissioned a service that have seen Pharmacists working in General Practice over the last 2 years.

This program is drawing to its conclusion and a celebration has been arranged. We will be showcasing successes and learnings from this highly successful program and providing an opportunity to network with peers in other practices.

If you are interested in understanding more about this program or anticipating employing a Pharmacist to work within your practice, [please register here](#) and come along to this informative event.

In addition to hearing from those in practices that have participated in this program there will be a panel of GPs, Pharmacist and a representative from the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA).

(Please ensure all individuals that will be attending from your practice register)