



Clinician alert #71 – all clinicians

Effective from 07 December 2021

New information

- WA mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for many occupations and workforces is being introduced in a phased approach. People must meet criteria for exemption against **ALL** COVID-19 vaccine formulations to qualify for a medical exemption from WA mandatory vaccination.
- This document assists medical practitioners in determining whether their patient meets criteria for a medical exemption to mandatory COVID-19 vaccination.
- An [online decision-making tool](#) has been developed to assist medical practitioners in assessing whether their patient meets medical exemption requirements from WA mandatory vaccination.

Medical Exemption to mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination – Guidance

Permanent Medical Vaccine Exemption recognised by AIR (IM011 Form)

The [Australian Immunisation Register \(AIR\) – immunisation medical exemption form \(IM011\)](#) allows recording of a permanent exemption to vaccination for:

- anaphylaxis following a previous dose of the relevant vaccine
- anaphylaxis to any component of the relevant vaccine

To be permanently medically exempt from WA mandatory vaccination, a patient must meet this requirement for **ALL** COVID-19 vaccine formulations available for use in Australia. If a patient has a medical contraindication to one brand of COVID-19 vaccine, they are usually able to receive an alternate brand.

Temporary Medical Vaccine Exemption recognised by AIR (IM011 Form)

A temporary exemption may be issued to defer vaccination in limited circumstances as per [ATAGI guidance](#). These exemptions should not be provided for longer than 6 months in the first instance. If the cause of the exemption persists at 6 months, a new form can be completed. These exemptions are only to be given where a suitable alternative COVID-19 vaccine is not readily available for the individual. Conditions for requesting temporary medical exemption on the AIR IM011 form are:

- Acute major medical illness e.g. major surgery or hospital admission for serious illness
- Vaccine recipient who is a risk to themselves or others during the vaccination process (e.g. due to severe neurodevelopmental condition)
- People with SARS-CoV-2 infection can defer vaccination until they have fully recovered from acute illness (this may be up to six months after onset of the SARS-CoV-2 infection).
- For an mRNA vaccine: Inflammatory cardiac illness within the past 3 months, e.g. myocarditis, pericarditis, endocarditis; acute rheumatic fever or acute rheumatic heart disease (i.e., with active myocardial inflammation); or acute decompensated heart failure. Further information is outlined by ATAGI, [Guidance on Myocarditis and Pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- Individuals who have experienced a serious adverse event* following COVID-19 vaccination. Examples of serious adverse events include Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS), Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP), Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) or Anaphylaxis.
- An adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) is considered serious if it:
 - requires in-patient hospitalisation or prolongation of existing hospitalisation OR results in persistent or significant disability/incapacity; AND
 - has been determined following review by, an experienced immunisation provider/medical specialist to be associated with a risk of recurrence if another dose is given; AND
 - has been reported to Western Australian Vaccine Safety Surveillance (WAVSS) system

Temporary Medical Vaccine Exemption provided by the Chief Health Officer (related to a medical condition) - Ineligible for AIR

- Very rarely an individual may have an ATAGI listed contraindication or precaution to COVID-19 vaccines which does not meet the options available on the IM011 form.
- For Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) vaccine this includes history of capillary leak syndrome, cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST), idiopathic splanchnic (mesenteric, portal or splenic vein) thrombosis, antiphospholipid syndrome (with thrombosis and/or miscarriage). Note-Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) is not licenced for use in people aged under 18 and mRNA (Pfizer and Moderna) vaccines are the ATAGI preferred vaccines for people aged < 60 years.
- Where contraindication exists to one vaccine, consideration to other available vaccines must be given. Temporary Medical Vaccine Exemption from the Chief Health Officer will only be considered if there are contraindications to **ALL** COVID-19 vaccine formulations.
- If an individual has a contraindication or precaution to **ALL** COVID-19 vaccine formulations, referral to the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital (SCGH) Specialist Immunisation Clinic is recommended. Your patient may submit a request to the Chief Health Officer for temporary exemption while awaiting an appointment at the SCGH Specialist Immunisation Clinic. The request for exemption to the CHO must be accompanied by medical evidence and confirmation of your referral to the SCGH immunisation clinic.

Examples of conditions which DO NOT warrant exemption and should not be referred to the specialist immunisation clinic include:

- Previous allergic reaction to a non-COVID-19 vaccine (not a contraindication to mRNA vaccine)
- Most allergic conditions. See [Clinician Alert#70- Anaphylaxis](#)
- Most chronic, stable, medical conditions (including 'long-COVID')
- Common, expected local or systemic reaction to previous COVID-19 vaccine
- Pregnancy

Action

- If your patient meets criteria for a medical exemption to COVID-19 vaccination that is recognised by AIR, you should complete the [AIR form \(IM011\)](#). All COVID-19 brand formulations must be selected on the medical exemption (IM011) form to be exempt from WA mandatory vaccination.
- The IM011 form can be completed online via PRODA for immediate processing; for guidance, please refer to: [How to record a medical contraindication on the AIR using HPOS](#).
- The AIR immunisation history statement will provide a person with digital evidence of a permanent or temporary medical contraindication to the available COVID-19 vaccines.
- People requiring temporary exemption from WA mandatory requirements while awaiting clinical assessment with a specialist provider such as the SCGH Specialist Immunisation Clinic or for confirmation of their medical exemption on AIR, should:
 - use the relevant [Direction specific exemption application form](#)
 - attach supporting documentation (e.g.: specialist referral letter or copy of IM011 form)
 - send their application COVIDVaccinationExemption@health.wa.gov.au
- People seeking information on exemptions related to their employment category can be directed to [WA Health Mandatory COVID-19 vaccination information](#).

By certifying medical contraindications responsibly, you are protecting the wellbeing of your patients and the broader community.

If you feel that you have completed the IM011 form under duress this can be reported to COVIDVaccinationExemption@health.wa.gov.au

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