



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

**Chief Medical Officer**

## **Updated advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation**

8 October 2021

Dear Colleague

I am writing to you to provide you with updated advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) about providing a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine as part of the primary course for individuals who are severely immunocompromised.

ATAGI's advice recommends a third primary dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to address the risk of a suboptimal response to the standard two dose schedule in severely immunocompromised populations. ATAGI recommends a third dose for these individuals to maximise the level of immune response to as close as possible to the general population.

ATAGI recommends that Comirnaty (Pfizer) or Spikevax (Moderna) be preferentially administered for the third primary dose and that third doses should ideally be administered two to six months after the second dose; minimum interval of four weeks between the second and third dose is acceptable.

ATAGI does not recommend antibody testing for assessing immunity to SARS-CoV-2 following COVID-19 vaccination, including in immunocompromised individuals after a second or third dose, as there are no serological assays that provide a definitive correlate of immunity to SARS-CoV-2. Further, ATAGI also does not recommend subsequent doses beyond the third dose at this time, as patients who fail to respond to third doses may not respond to further doses.

The ATAGI advice is available on the Department of Health's website at <https://health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-the-use-of-a-third-primary-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine-in-individuals-who-are-severely-immunocompromised>

This advice is separate from booster shots for healthcare workers, older adults and the general population. ATAGI is anticipated to provide further advice on boosters in the near future.

Thank you for your continued contribution and effort to support the Australian community and the COVID-19 vaccination program. I encourage you to reach out to any of your immunocompromised patients who are who are fully vaccinated, to book them in for their third dose.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PKelly', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Professor Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer  
8 October 2021