

# FAQs

## COVID-19 Vaccination in RACFs

3 March 2021

*Note: This is a rapidly evolving situation and information is subject to change as further information is made available by the Australian Government Department of Health.*

Below are some of the common questions from Residential Aged Care Providers that have raised with WAPHA and Aspen Medical over the last few weeks.

Have a question? Please review the [Triaging process for aged care facilities](#) document.

- If the question is for the PHN (WAPHA) please contact [racfvaccination@wapha.org.au](mailto:racfvaccination@wapha.org.au)
- If the question is for the vaccine workforce provider (Aspen Medical) please contact Paul Sumner at [psumner@aspenmedical.com](mailto:psumner@aspenmedical.com).

## 1. Scheduling and Planning

WAPHA recommends that all RACFs review the [COVID-19 vaccine aged care readiness toolkit](#) provided by the Australian Government Department of Health, including the consent documents & clinical governance documents.

***Our RACF/s have not yet been given a date/time to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. How do we find this out?***

At this stage, the schedule of vaccinations is being released on a week-by-week basis. When Aspen Medical and WAPHA receive the approved list from the Australian Government Department of Health, the following will occur:

- The contact person for the relevant aged care provider will be contacted by WAPHA by phone and by email. The email will include the proposed vaccination date and time, as well as key information needed to plan and prepare for the visit.
- Aspen Medical will also contact the contact person for the relevant aged care provider to advise the proposed vaccination date and to schedule the 'scouting visit' prior to vaccination day.

If you have not yet been contacted by WAPHA or Aspen Medical with your vaccination date, please do not be concerned. We will in touch as soon as we have the proposed date and time for your RACF.

***Will Aspen Medical's vaccine administration team (VATs) bring their own Personal Protective Equipment/sharps containers/needles etc?***

Yes, the VATs will be fully self-sufficient and will bring all of the required equipment. The VATs may need to plug in electrical equipment on the day.

***What does the RACF need to do on vaccination day?***

Prior to vaccination day, please ensure your facility has worked through all of the items identified in the [COVID-19 vaccination – Planning checklist for vaccination day in residential aged care facilities](#) and the [COVID-19 vaccination – Site readiness checklist for COVID-19 vaccination in residential aged care](#). Aspen Medical will visit your RACF prior to vaccination day (the 'scouting visit') and will work through any issues identified in the site readiness checklist with your facility. In the *Planning Checklist for vaccination day in residential aged care facilities* document, there is a step to get in contact with the Primary Health Network

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support person. In WA, this is WAPHA and you can get in contact by emailing [racfvaccination@wapha.org.au](mailto:racfvaccination@wapha.org.au).

On vaccination day, you will need to ensure your RACF:

- Requests Aspen Medical staff present evidence of current influenza vaccination and evidence of completion of the Commonwealth COVID-19 Vaccination Training Program.
- Has an appropriate Clinical Lead on site ready to meet Aspen Medical and to sign off on the 'sign off sheet'.
- Has prepared the residents for the vaccination clinic, together with their consent form and any information about:
  - the resident's medical conditions, allergies, bleeding disorders or immunocompromise (i.e. weakened immune system)
  - any medications the resident is taking
  - any reactions the resident has had to any vaccine in the past
  - for each resident, any communication, cultural or behavioural factors that are relevant to the vaccination process
  - whether a support person is required to be with the resident at time of vaccination

Review the [COVID-19 vaccine RACF readiness](#) documents available from the Australian Government Department of Health for more information.

### ***When will staff at RACFs get the vaccine?***

Aspen Medical confirmed that their agreement with the Australian Government Department of Health is to vaccinate RACF residents and staff. However, so far only residents have been vaccinated. WAPHA encourages all facilities to start obtaining consent from both residents and staff, in preparation for future weeks.

### ***What staff are included in the definition of 'RACF staff' for the phase 1a rollout?***

The Australian Government Department of Health has advised that all people working at a residential aged care facility who are responsible for resident care, support and services for residents, maintenance and administration are eligible to receive the vaccination in phase 1a. This includes nursing and personal care staff, allied health professionals, and kitchen, cleaning, laundry, garden and office staff. GPs and other health professionals who routinely provide care within the residential facility are also eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as part of phase 1a.

Read the full explanation here: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-vaccination-staff-definition-for-phase-1a-inclusion-in-residential-aged-and-disability-care-facilities>.

### ***Is this RACF rollout strictly for RACF residents?***

Aspen Medical has been provided resident numbers by the Australian Government Department of Health. Aspen Medical are using those numbers to inform planning. If there is a significant difference between the number of residents the RACF has compared to Aspen Medical's information, there will need to be a conversation about why there is such a discrepancy.

Transition care program clients can be vaccinated as part of the rollout. The Australian Government Department of Health has said that due consideration must be given to whether

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the resident will be able to make the second dose or whether arrangements can be made for them to return for the second dose prior to administering the first dose.

### **Our RACF has answered 'no' to some questions on the site readiness checklist – what do we need to do next?**

Aspen Medical will discuss the site readiness checklist with your facility prior to vaccination day to address any issues identified.

### **Are General Practitioners (GPs) that work at our RACF being contacted by WAPHA?**

Yes, WAPHA is in the process of notifying GPs associated with the week 1 RACFs of the rollout next week. GPs that attend Aegis Woodlake are being contacted as a priority.

## 2. Consent

### ***What does the RACF have to do regarding consent?***

The RACF is responsible for obtaining consent from staff and residents for the phase 1 rollout. More information on this can be found in the [COVID-19 vaccination – Clinical governance requirements for COVID-19 vaccination in residential aged care](#).

### ***What is the role of the GP in the consent process?***

GPs are an important part of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in RACFs and we encourage all RACFs to communicate regularly with GPs that provide care to residents in your facility. Support from an individual's GP may be required:

- To assess a resident's suitability to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
- To speak to the resident or their family about concerns they may have about the COVID-19 vaccine and to discuss risks/benefits of having the vaccine.
- To discuss risks/benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine with RACF staff.

GPs that provide care in your facility may request to be present on vaccination day, however a GP does not have to be present.

The COVID-19 vaccine does not need to be prescribe by a GP.

### ***In between vaccination dose 1 and dose 2, will the consent forms leave the RACF or will they stay at the RACF? Does the RACF need to reproduce the consent form for the second dose?***

Aspen Medical is not responsible for retaining or holding the consent forms. This is the responsibility of the RACF. Aspen Medical will only be responsible for affirming that consent has been obtained on the day of vaccination.

Prior to the second dose being administered, Aspen Medical will again visit the RACF for a second 'scouting visit'. Estimates will again be confirmed and consent will be affirmed by Aspen Medical prior to administering the second dose.

Aspen Medical will also provide a hard copy vaccination certificate on the day of vaccination – this will be printed. Records will be entered into Aspen Medical's software (MMEX) and reported into the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

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### ***Consent forms – are we meant to be drafting our own form?***

The Australian Government Department of Health has provided a consent form online. You can access it here: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-consent-form-for-covid-19-vaccination>. The use of the Australian Government Department of Health consent form is not mandatory.

Consent guidance is available from ATAGI:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-atagi-immunisation-provider-guide-to-obtaining-informed-consent-for-covid-19-vaccine>.

Additional guidance will be provided by the Australian Government Department of Health regarding consent in RACFs.

Aspen Medical would expect consent to be documented before they vaccinate.

## **3. Adverse Events and Monitoring**

### ***Who has responsibility for adverse reactions?***

Aspen Medical are responsible for managing any adverse events on vaccination day. Aspen Medical will come prepared with an anaphylaxis kit to manage 5-10 anaphylactic reactions. This responsibility ends 15 minutes after the final vaccination is given, when Aspen Medical will formally hand clinical responsibility back to the RACF.

For staff working in RACFs, the Australian Government has developed a fact sheet, [Monitoring and reporting side effects](#).

The WA Department of Health will contact each RACF day 3 post-vaccination. They will ask whether there have been any deaths or hospitalisations post vaccination. The WA Department of Health is drafting a letter to confirm this which will be sent out to all RACFs.

### **Need more information?**

- Questions about the COVID-19 vaccination rollout in RACFs can be directed to [racfvaccination@wapha.org.au](mailto:racfvaccination@wapha.org.au).
- WAPHA has a RACF COVID-19 vaccination webpage <https://www.wapha.org.au/health-professionals/coronavirus-news/residential-aged-care-covid-19-immunisation/>. You can also subscribe to our RACF COVID-19 Vaccination update [here](#).
- Further information is available from the Australian Government Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/information-for-aged-care-providers-and-workers-about-covid-19-vaccines#resources> This site will be update regularly as new resources become available.