

27 March 2023

Protect Yourself and Those Around You with a 2023 COVID-19 Booster Dose

Wentworth Healthcare, the provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health, is urging eligible people to get their 2023 COVID-19 booster, which is now available at participating general practices and pharmacies.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay, said that only 68% of residents and about half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, over 12 years old have received more than two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. Of children aged 5-11 years, approximately a third have received a second dose, and only about a quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children received their first dose.

“It’s important not to become complacent. COVID-19 is still circulating in our community, and we will experience additional waves, particularly as we head into winter. Research continues to show that immunity created by the vaccine begins to wane over time. A booster dose increases immunity against the virus, providing better protection.”

According to information on the Australian Government’s website, studies indicate that receiving a booster dose with a bivalent Omicron-containing vaccine decreases the chance of hospitalisation, severe disease and death when compared to those who have only received the initial course or who are not vaccinated at all.

“As a community, we need to look out for not only ourselves, but those around us who may be more vulnerable and susceptible to the health impacts of COVID-19, such as the elderly, those with disabilities, or those who have significant or complex health needs,” she said.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) **recommends** that all adults **aged 65 years and over**, and adults **aged 18-64** who have medical comorbidities, are at risk of severe disease, have a disability or complex health needs should get the 2023 booster.

Adults **aged 18-64** who do not have other risk factors, children and adolescents **aged 5-17 years** with medical comorbidities, a disability, or complex health needs should also consider getting the booster.

People can receive 2023 booster 6 months after a confirmed infection, or 6 months after your last COVID-19 vaccine dose (regardless of the number of prior doses received).

The 2023 booster is available at most local GPs and pharmacies. If your local practice or pharmacy does not offer the vaccine, you can find your closest provider by visiting the Vaccine Clinic Finder online at www.covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au



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