



Vaccine Update 498- COVID-19 vaccine transition, needle anxiety resources and World Hepatitis Day

COVID-19 vaccine transition to National Immunisation Program (NIP)

From 1 October 2026, COVID-19 vaccination in Australia will transition from the current [National COVID-19 Vaccination Program \(NCVP\)](#) to ongoing delivery under the National Immunisation Program (NIP). This transition will support the long-term sustainable approach for managing COVID-19 in Australia, focused on protecting the community against severe illness for those at highest risk.

NIP eligibility may differ from the current eligibility. Anyone who is not eligible for a free COVID-19 vaccine under the NIP will be able to purchase one through the private market.

Information for immunisation providers:

To ensure that you have sufficient supplies ahead of the transition to the NIP, allocations for Pfizer (LP.8.1) 12 years+ (pre-filled syringe (PFS)) will increase to 1,000 doses from 25 July 2026.

Before the transition, final ordering through Commonwealth processes for the NCVP will close on 28 August 2026. It is important that all orders are placed before this date as no orders will be processed after this date, including orders requested through the Additional Order process. After transition to the NIP on 1 October 2026, ordering will be recommenced via the usual WA state vaccine ordering process.

More information will be provided as it becomes available, including updated eligibility for the NIP funded vaccination.

Needle anxiety resources

“Needle Anxiety” refers to an overwhelming fear of medical procedures involving needles or injections, which can manifest in both psychological and physical symptoms, including avoidance behaviour and significant distress. Minimising pain during vaccination can help to prevent the distress that manifests from needle anxiety, the development of needle fears and subsequent health care avoidance. Positive experiences during vaccination helps to maintain and promote trust in health care providers.

The [Stan Perron Immunisation Centre](#), in collaboration with the Perth Children’s Hospital [Keeping Kids in No Distress \(KKIND\)](#) team, has recently collated a [series of resources](#) (internal link) for WA Health staff to help parents, families and immunisation providers who may have a child or young person who is experiencing needle anxiety, including:

This includes the following newly developed Comfort Planning tools (all accessible via external links):

- [Immunisation comfort for babies: a tool to optimise immunisation experiences for babies](#)
- [Immunisation comfort for young children: a tool to optimise immunisation experiences for young children](#)
- [Young person completed immunisation Comfort Plan](#)
- [‘I need an immunisation’ social story](#)

There are also new supports for FluMist® vaccination:

- [Nasal flu immunisation social story](#)
- [Nasal flu immunisation flip book social story](#)
- [Nasal flu comfort plan](#)

World Hepatitis Day

[World Hepatitis Day](#) 2026 was on Tuesday **28 July**. This day aims to raise awareness about [viral hepatitis](#), and to improve treatment of hepatitis B and C in Australia. This year, the National Theme for World Hepatitis Day in Australia was “Take the Next Step.” The theme was set to encourage people to take the next step for their health, no matter where they are in their journey.

There is an effective vaccine to prevent and manage chronic hepatitis B. See [immunisation schedule and catch-up vaccines](#) and the [Australian Immunisation Handbook \(AIH\)](#) for more **This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.**

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information on doses, timing and contradictions. Though hepatitis C is not vaccine preventable, it is curable.

WA Health's '[Look after your blood](#)' campaign aims to raise awareness of blood borne virus (BBV) prevention and testing among Aboriginal people, with a specific focus on HIV, hepatitis B and C.

For those living with or affected by hepatitis B, the [Hep B Hub WA](#) is a state-wide service provided by Royal Perth Hospital. The clinic offers community health professionals that coordinate care, and offer diagnosis, monitoring, treatment, support and education from general practitioners (GPs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) for chronic hepatitis B. This empowers community clinicians and assists in reduction of specialist referrals.

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Classification:

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