

IMO FAQ on Very High Risk (Cohort 4) and High Risk Patients (Cohort 7)



IRISH MEDICAL
ORGANISATION
Ceardchumann Dochtúirí na hÉireann

COHORT 4 AND COHORT 7 COVID VACCINATION PROGRAMME

- This programme is in line with NIAC recommendations for patients in the Very High Risk and High-Risk Category.
- This Programme is for patients aged 18-59.
- The patient numbers as determined by the HSE are 120,000 in Cohort 4 and 300,000 in Cohort 7.
- The vaccine to be used for this programme is Pfizer and 420,000 Dose 1 and Dose 2 have been allocated for this programme in line with the expected supply lines due in on the dates indicated.
- In terms of the amount of doses each practice will receive will be in line with this overall allocation and distributed equitably among practices.
- The programme will commence week commencing 26th April and the objective is to complete by week commencing 5th July.
- It is accepted that not all patients will meet strict clinical criteria and that clinical judgement will be used. GPs are asked to use best efforts in this regard.
- Clinical Guidance is to be viewed as an aid not a constraint in using clinical judgement.
- Recognition that not all patients may be identified or accommodated within this programme.
- This is an opt in Programme.

Frequently Asked Questions

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Is there a new Age Range?

Yes. This programme in General Practice is for patients in Cohort 4 and 7 who are aged between 18 and 59 years.

Is cohort 4 to be completed before Cohort 7?

Yes. Cohort 4 are clinically defined as Very Risk Patients and Cohort 7 are High Risk Patients.

What patients are GPs being asked to vaccinate in Cohort 4?

Some patients within this Cohort have been vaccinated through the acute settings. While GPs may vaccinate any patients from within this clinical group, GPs are asked to focus on:

- Diabetics with HbA1c>58mmol in last 12 months
- Obesity – BMI >40
- Chronic Resp Disease – on home oxygen or hospitalized in past 12 months.

The list of conditions in Cohort 7 is very large – am I to contact all patients?

- a) Mental Health Services to identify and vaccinate patients with severe mental health illness.
- b) Disability Services to identify and vaccinate those with intellectual disability not already vaccinated.
- c) **General Practice is being asked to identify and vaccinate other patients in the High-Risk Group aged 18-59**
 - Diabetics – all other diabetics Type 1 and 2
 - Obesity – BMI>35
 - Chronic Respiratory Disease – largely a matter of clinical judgement and includes severe asthma, moderately severe COPD
 - Chronic Heart (and vascular) Disease – patients on medication/treatment for heart failure or on hypertensive medication, diagnosis of peripheral vascular disease or history of vascular surgery
 - Immunocompromised – matter of clinical judgement
 - Cancers (not already vaccinated)
 - Chronic Kidney / Liver / Neurological Disease (not already vaccinated)

Do I need to undertake Risk Stratifications / Blood Tests or BMI Assessments for Cohort 4 or Cohort 7?

No. GPs are requested to use their best efforts through practice management systems, clinical judgement, clinical guidance.

How do I know if my patients have already been vaccinated?

A facility is being made available to GPs through a secure web link so that GPs can check if their patients have already been vaccinated in another setting. It will be important to save time on calls that before booking clinics your team check the details on the secure web link. This facility is expected to be provided by the HSE prior to 26th April.

Are there any medico-legal issues in terms of identifying patients in Cohort 4 and Cohort 7?

No. GPs are asked to use their best efforts to identify patients in these cohorts. In line with the National Programme all adults will be invited to register for vaccine on an age sequencing basis through the national portal.

What is the Interval Time between Dose 1 and Dose 2?

The vaccine being used for this Programme is Pfizer (with a small amount of Moderna). The clinical guidelines for Pfizer are:

- Use within 120 from time of defrosting (usually 3 days after delivery but exact time indicated on vaccine label)
- Use vial within 6 hours of opening
- INTERVAL PERIOD BETWEEN DOSE 1 and DOSE 2 is 28 DAYS
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What is the time frame and delivery schedule for this programme?

Deliveries for 1st Dose of Cohort 4 will take place on weeks commencing:

26th April 3rd May 10th May

- Each Practice will receive ONE delivery in one of these weeks to complete the first dose of Cohort 4.
- These supplies will be in addition to the 2nd doses for remaining over 70.
- If your patient numbers are too high for one delivery and you wish to receive over two deliveries, you can discuss with your RM and every effort will be made to accommodate large clinics.
- **2nd Doses will be delivered in line with the 28-day interval period in all cases.**

Deliveries for 1st Dose of Cohort 7 will take place on weeks commencing.

17th May* 24th May 31st May 7th June

- Each Practice will receive ONE delivery in one of these weeks for 1st Dose Cohort 7 and 2nd Dose Cohort 4
- If your patient numbers are too high for one delivery and you wish to receive over two deliveries, you can discuss with your RM and every effort will be made to accommodate large clinics.
- **2nd Doses for Cohort 7 will be delivered in line with the 28-day interval period in all cases.**
- This should see programme finish by w/c 5th July.

*** This delivery will include first doses for category 7 only.**

Will I get the full amount to cover the patients indicated on Profile Cohort 4 Form?

As indicated above the total vaccine doses allocated to this programme are to cover the estimated patient numbers of 420,000.

I want to participate in this Programme and have previously signed up for the AZ Programme do I need to do anything else now?

Yes. You should complete the cohort profile form issued by email from GP Vaccines and return by 19th April.

- This form requests indicative number of patients in Cohort 4 and 7 excluding patients aged over 60.
- Once you complete this form it will be deemed to be confirmation of your willingness to participate in the programme.
- You can opt out of the programme after Cohort 4 but noting that you must complete second doses for all patients who you vaccinated on your first delivery.

If you indicated, you wished to participate in the AZ programme but DO NOT wish to participate in this new Pfizer programme do not return the profile form.

I will be participating – what happens next?

The closing date for receipt of Profile Forms for the Programme is COB 19th April following which:

- GPs who will be scheduled for delivery on w/c 26th April will be contacted no later than Wednesday 21st April advising them of delivery date AND number of vials to be delivered.

- All other GPs who are receiving deliveries in subsequent weeks will be contacted by Wednesday 28th April.
- Your delivery day / week is the same schedule you are on every fortnight.
- DO NOT BOOK CLINICS until you have your supply confirmed.

I was in a buddying up arrangement with another practice can I get deliveries to my own surgery?

Yes. Once you submit the Cohort Profile Form for your practice by 19th April. It is important to note that once you move to receiving deliveries at your own practice location this is the location where you will receive your 2nd Doses of the Over 70s Programme.

We are in a buddy up arrangement can we continue with that arrangement?

Yes. Complete ONE Profile cohort form for both practices and advise GPVaccines in the mail that the form covers an existing buddy up arrangement, naming both practices.

I am currently delivering vaccines through the GP Led Clinics (Dublin, Cork Galway) – can I still participate in this programme through this arrangement?

Yes. The GP Hubs will stay in place for this Programme.

- If you are continuing to participate through the GP Clinic DO NOT submit a profile form to GPVaccines – you will be contacted by the GP Lead in the clinic with regard to booking patients and the amounts of vaccines available.
- If you no longer wish to participate through the GP Clinic complete and submit Cohort Profile Form and return to GPVaccines by COB 19th April

Can I vaccinate in an alternative setting?

Yes, on the conditions that the alternative settings:

- Has designated registration, vaccination and observation areas.
- Suitable area for reconstitution of vaccine.
- Social Distancing Measures are in place.
- Suitable cleaning and sanitising arrangements are in place.
- Public Liability is secured by the GP for the use of the premises as a vaccination clinic.

You should redirect your delivery to the alternative setting.

I will not be in a position to undertake the Programme for Cohort 4 or 7 how will my patients be offered a vaccine?

On receipt of Profile Cohort Forms an assessment will be made as to how many practices are not participating and a process to communicate with those practices to identify patients will commence. Patients can only be accommodated on the provision of a listing for Cohort 4 and 7 from the GP and there can be no self referral for medical conditions to mass vaccination clinics.

Patients aged 60-69

Where are patients in this age group to be referred to?

- GPs have NO role in vaccinating patients aged 60-69
- Advice is to direct patients to HSE Vaccine Registration on hse.ie or the HSE Live Helpline (1850 24 1850) to register
- GPs have NO role in advising patients in this age cohort about the HSE Vaccination Programme
- GPs CANNOT offer patients any alternative pathway for another vaccine.
- HSE are NOT supplying GPs with vaccines for this age group.

I am a Moderna Practice will I continue to receive this vaccine for Cohort 4 and 7?

This will depend on the availability of Moderna, and you may be supplied with Pfizer if you are participating in this programme.

SURPLUS VACCINES:

How am I to allocate any surplus vaccines from my Over 70s clinic?

At this point in time GPs should **NOT vaccinate patients between 60 and 69 EXCEPT in the following circumstances:**

- Where at your FINAL 1st Dose Over 70s clinic there are surplus vaccines, you may administer to patients in Cohort 4 (including patients in the 60-69 age cohort)
- You will receive sufficient 2nd Doses for all patients who received Dose 1 at these clinics.
- Where the practice is continuing with the programme to administer to Cohort 4 and 7 GPs should allocate any surplus vaccines from 2nd Dose and FINAL Over 70s clinic within Cohort 4 first and then Cohort 7 within the Age Range 18 to 59.

- Clinical guidance for practices who are NOT continuing with the programme for Cohort 4 and 7 on the use surplus vaccines will be provided shortly.

What do I do with over 70s patients who I have missed?

If you have over 70s patients who were missed, these can be vaccinated with the patients in Group 4 or Group 7.

OTHER QUERIES

I have a patient with no PPS. Can I claim for them?

Yes, you may enter their details as normal omitting the PPS and submit the claim. These claims will not be processed immediately but will be processed after a period of validation.

I do not have a practice management system. I have not been able to claim to date. How will I claim for the patients I have vaccinated?

A system is being developed similar to the PCRS suite where GPs will be able to claim on same. At present such GPs should keep the patient details and further communication will issue on this.

I have a patient who has received a 1st Dose AZ vaccine in the UK – how do I arrange Dose 2?

The patient should be referred to the HSE Helpline as GPs will not have the facility to administer Dose 2.

I am one of the 100 GP Practices who received a delivery of Astra Zeneca what is the guidance in respect of these vaccines?

Those GPs are asked to store the vaccine appropriately and further guidance will issue early next week as to these supplies.