
MEMORANDUM

To: Chief Executives, Hospital and Health Services

Copies to: Directors of Medical Services, Hospital and Health Services
Bronwyn Nardi, State Director COVID-19 Vaccination Taskforce

From: Dr Jeannette Young PSM
Queensland Chief Health Officer
and Deputy Director-General

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Subject: **Adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination**

File Ref: C-ECTF-21/5399

You will be aware of recent reports of rare but serious side effects involving thrombosis (clotting) with thrombocytopenia (low blood platelet count) following receipt of the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca. This syndrome is known as Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) or vaccine induced prothrombotic immune thrombocytopenia (VIPIT).

Queensland Health is continuing to implement the COVID-19 Vaccination Program for suitable cohorts in accordance with the ATAGI recommendations. An important component of the program rollout is the surveillance of Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) managed by the Vaccine Command Centre (VCC). Given recent events, it is critical that we are vigilant about reporting any AEFI following COVID-19 vaccine.

I am requesting that clinicians within each of your facilities be reminded of their obligation under the *Public Health Act 2005* to report serious, unexpected or uncommon AEFIs. Full text of the Act is available at <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/specific/public-health-act>.

Given that onset of TTS/VIPIT generally occurs 4-20 days post vaccination, with some reports out to 29 days, as a precaution, I am requesting that patients presenting within **30 days** post AstraZeneca vaccination with signs and symptoms of thrombosis be considered carefully for TTS/VIPIT¹ and immediately (within 48hrs) reported as an adverse event of special interest to the COVID-19 VCC Clinical team. Reports can be made via the COVID-19 Adverse Event Following Immunisation Portal at <https://healthserviceportal.health.qld.gov.au/cvaefi> or PDF Form at https://www.health.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0026/1025189/covid-aei-reporting-form.pdf

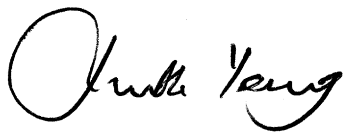
These reports are sent directly to the Therapeutic Goods Administration by the VCC to investigate possible correlation to the vaccination. Further information about Queensland Health's AEFI program can be found at <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/immunisation/service-providers/adverse-event>

For further information, Queensland Health's clinical advice and recommendations for use of AstraZeneca vaccine can be found at <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/novel-coronavirus-qld-clinicians/covid-19-vaccination-information-for-healthcare-workers>. ATAGI's advice and recommendations can be found at <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-astrazeneca-vaccine-in-response-to-new-vaccine-safety-concerns>

I ask that you remind health care providers and the public to report any unexpected or serious adverse events occurring following any COVID-19 vaccines.

As a precaution, patients with this suspected condition should NOT receive any heparin or platelet transfusions without prior consultation with subspecialist thrombosis haematologist. These treatments may potentially worsen the clinical course.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this important issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeannette Young', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Dr Jeannette Young PSM
**Queensland Chief Health Officer and
Deputy Director-General
Queensland Health**
15 April 2021