

# Best Practices for Administering Vaccines

Reading time:

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Tags: [Medico-Legal](#) | [Medical Practitioner](#)



A common query received by MIPS is “Am I covered to administer vaccines?”.

Yes, the [MIPS Indemnity Insurance Policy](#) provides cover for healthcare treatments (including administering vaccinations), subject to the conditions and exclusions of the policy, provided the member has the appropriate training, qualifications and experience.

However, there may be other associated risks with vaccine storage, transport and administration for which the practice or practice staff may be responsible. Many practices will be administering the vaccine and should assess the potential liability of the practice and its staff and consider insurance coverage associated to these wider vaccine-related liabilities beyond the individual practitioner.

When a MIPS healthcare practitioner has ownership in a healthcare practice, there are a number of areas that may lead to potential liabilities, such as:

- Storage and preparation of the vaccine
- Transport of the vaccine
- Administration of patient records, making appointments etc
- Follow-up of patients, especially to acquire their second dose

These are some of the questions MIPS has already answered for members.

**“My practice has staff administering the vaccine. What happens if someone sues my practice for incorrectly administering the vaccine?”**

In many cases a civil action (being sued) may name individuals as well as a practice. MIPS’ Indemnity Insurance Policy protects individual members and includes cover for non-AHPRA registered practice staff such as practice managers, assistants and receptionists but not AHPRA registered practitioners such as nurses. Those staff that are AHPRA registered, should obtain their own independent indemnity insurance.

For further details about [practice entity insurance](#)

**“Are my practice staff covered for the work they do storing and assisting practitioners administering the vaccine?”**

MIPS can assist and defend you and your ‘practice staff’ within the terms of the policy for claims that allege you failed to follow proper process for the handling and storage of the vaccine. Cover for Practice staff is provided in clause 2.9 of your MIPS Indemnity Insurance Policy.

**“Practice Staff means a person employed directly or indirectly by You to the extent that they assist You to provide Healthcare to Your patients, but excludes any person who is, or is required to be, registered with AHPRA.”**

AHPRA registered healthcare providers including doctors and nurses, who provide healthcare, must have their own professional indemnity insurance, your MIPS membership will not cover them. Cover is subject to the standard terms, conditions and exclusions of the Indemnity Insurance Policy included in your MIPS membership.

Healthcare practice owners should also consider separate practice entity cover, this would generally cover liability arising from errors related to inappropriate storage and handling of vaccinations or the recall of patients. You may also wish to consider protecting your practice and staff.

**"What happens if the patient does not return for the second dose, do I have to follow up?"**

Yes, you should have a robust plan in place to follow up patients. You should adhere to Government guidelines regarding administration of second doses. In the first instance, MIPS advises members to make it clear that the vaccines currently available require two doses at advised intervals. You should establish agreed methods of communication with the patient and consider phone, SMS or postal follow-up for patients ideally varying the contact method if the patient is not responsive. You have a duty to take into account the specific patient, for example a person with a disability who is reliant on a carer may not be able to receive or read SMS or posted letters.

MIPS can assist and defend you for claims that allege you failed to follow proper process (eg follow-up) in the provision of healthcare, however, MIPS will be better able to defend you if you can provide comprehensive healthcare records including documented follow up.

If you own a practice the practice may be liable for inappropriate storage, handling and recall of patients. You may also wish to consider [practice entity insurance cover](#) to protect your practice and staff.

**"Does MIPS cover me and my practice staff, eg assistants and practice managers, if the vaccine is stored incorrectly?"**

MIPS can assist and defend you for claims that allege you failed to follow proper process for the handling and storage of the vaccine. You must ensure that you have appropriate policy, process and equipment, in places. MIPS will be better able to defend you if you can provide comprehensive healthcare records including the handling, storage and calibration of the equipment.

If you own a practice, it may be liable for inappropriate storage, handling and recall of patients. You may also wish to consider [practice entity insurance cover](#) to protect your practice and staff.

To ensure that your practice is appropriately covered, MIPS would encourage members to consider a separate practice entity policy. MIPS has established a relationship with Aon to help MIPS members to consider and acquire appropriate cover. Aon have developed Healthcare Clinic Malpractice cover specifically for the Australian market. [Make an enquiry](#)

Insurance cover is subject to the terms, conditions and exclusions of the policy. The information provided is general advice only and does not take into account your personal circumstances or needs. You should review the [Member Handbook Combined PDS and FSG](#) and/or contact MIPS on 1800 061 113, before making a decision. Information is current as at the date published.

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