

GUIDE TO COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is a virus that can make people very sick.
- A virus is a sickness that can spread from one person to another person.
- Here in New Zealand we have all worked hard to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- COVID-19 is still a very big problem in many countries around the world.
- Most people get better from COVID-19, but some must go to hospital and people can die.
- There are now vaccines that will help stop us getting sick from COVID-19.

What are the signs of COVID-19?

- A cough
- A high temperature – this is when you feel very hot
- Finding it hard to breath
- A sore throat
- Sneezing and a runny nose
- Not being able to smell or taste things, when you could before

COVID-19 Vaccine

What is a vaccine?

- Vaccines protect you and help stop you getting sick.
- Some vaccines you may have had before include the flu and measles vaccine.
- Most vaccines are an injection that you get in your arm.

How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?

- The COVID-19 vaccine works by teaching your body to fight the virus, so you don't get sick.
- You need two doses of the vaccine to get the best protection.

Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- The COVID-19 vaccine will help protect you from getting sick from the virus.
- It will help reduce the risk of passing the virus on to your family, friends and community.

There are enough vaccines for everyone

- The New Zealand Government bought enough vaccine for everyone in New Zealand, and some of the Pacific Islands.
- Everyone, 12 years and over, who wants a COVID-19 vaccine will get one.

- The Government encourages everyone to get a vaccination.

The vaccine is free for everyone

- The COVID-19 vaccine is free for everyone in New Zealand.
- You won't have to pay any money to get the COVID-19 vaccine.
- If you visit your family doctor to get the vaccine, the appointment will be free.

Will getting the vaccine stop me giving COVID-19 to others?

This is a new vaccine. We know it will help stop you feeling sick from COVID-19. We don't know yet if it will stop you from catching the virus and giving it to your friends or family, so continue to stay at home if you're unwell, cover coughs or sneezes and wash your hands.

Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No, you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Safety

Is the vaccine safe?

- The vaccine was tested by Medsafe; they checked very carefully to make sure the COVID-19 vaccine is safe enough to give to people.
- Medsafe's job is to check how safe and effective medicines are.
- Medsafe is independent and is not part of the companies that make the vaccine – they cannot influence the decisions Medsafe makes.
- The vaccine has already been safely given to millions of people around the world.
- The vaccine will not give you COVID-19.

How can the vaccine be safe when it was developed faster than usual?

- Because of how bad COVID-19 is, scientists and governments from around the world worked together to find a vaccine to help stop people from getting sick or dying.
- Sharing information and funding meant they could work faster than normal and without affecting the safety of the vaccine.

Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- The COVID-19 vaccine will be offered to everyone in New Zealand 12 years and older.
- The vaccine will not be given to people aged 12 or younger. This is because there has not been a lot of testing of the COVID-19 vaccine on children yet.
- If you are pregnant talk to your vaccinator, midwife or doctor.
- If you have had an allergic reaction to any vaccine or injection in the past, tell your vaccinator.
- If you are on medicines that thin your blood or have a bleeding disorder, please let your vaccinator know.
- If you are worried about getting vaccinated because of your health or any medicines you take, talk to your doctor.
- If you have COVID-19 symptoms, get a test and stay at home until you get your results. You can be vaccinated once you have a negative test.

A vaccinator is a person who is trained to give you the COVID-19 vaccine. It may be a nurse, or your doctor.

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine

Choosing to get the vaccine

- Getting the vaccine will help stop you from getting sick from COVID-19.

- We encourage you to take this opportunity to get the vaccine.
- It is not compulsory to have the COVID-19 vaccine; it is your choice if you want to get it.
- If you don't want the vaccine, you don't have to get it.
- If you're worried or not sure about getting the vaccine, talk to your family doctor or vaccinator.

Two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine

- You get the best protection against COVID-19 after two doses of the vaccine.
- It is important you get your second injection, so the vaccine works well.
- You will be asked to get your second dose of the vaccine at least six weeks after your first dose.

How will I get my vaccine?

- There will be different options to make getting the vaccine as easy as possible, including through Māori and Pacific providers, doctors, pop-up centres, pharmacies, medical and hauora centres and community clinics.
- You can find locations online at:
<https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19-vaccination/>
- You can book your vaccine online at:
<https://bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz/>

Or call the COVID Vaccination Healthline on **0800 28 29 26**

Support people

- You can take a support person with you to your appointment.
- You can ask that an interpreter come with you to your appointment if you need one.

Getting the vaccine

- When you go to your vaccination, a healthcare worker will ask you about your health history, such as what medication you take or what conditions you have. They will also give you some information about the COVID-19 vaccine.
- If you want the vaccine, you will need to agree to getting the vaccine. Your vaccinator can give you information to help you decide.
- If you say yes, the vaccinator will give you the COVID-19 vaccine into your arm using a needle.
- The vaccine will usually go into your upper arm.
- You will need to relax and sit still.
- You can look away from your arm and close your eyes if you are feeling nervous.
- You can also listen to music or talk to someone who supports you.
- The vaccinator will wipe your skin clean first.

- You may feel a pinch when the needle goes in.
- The vaccinator will cover the place where the needle went in with a band-aid, or tape and a cotton ball.

What happens after I get the vaccine?

- You'll need to stay for at least 20 minutes after your vaccine so the healthcare worker can check that you're ok and not having an allergic reaction to the vaccine. Your support person can stay with you.
- Once the healthcare worker says you're fine, you can leave and carry on with your day.

How might I feel after I get the vaccine?

Some people might get side effects. This can happen with all medicines.

The most common side effects are:

- a sore arm from your injection – you can put a cold cloth or ice pack on it to feel better
- a headache
- or feeling tired.

These side effects are usually mild and shouldn't last long.

If you are worried about how you feel after your vaccine, speak with your doctor or call Healthline 0800 358 5453.

Call 111 if you're really worried.

Allergic reactions

It's very unlikely you will get a bad allergic reaction after your vaccine.

Staying for at least 20 minutes after your vaccine means the healthcare workers can make sure you are ok and don't have any reactions.

If you do have a reaction, the healthcare workers are trained to help you.

Can I get my flu or MMR vaccine at the same time as my COVID-19 vaccine?

- You cannot get your flu or MMR vaccine at the same time as your COVID-19 vaccine.
- You need to get your flu or Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine at a different time to your COVID-19 vaccine. This is in case you get any side effects, so your doctor knows what made you unwell.
- You can get your flu vaccine two weeks before your first COVID-19 dose or two weeks after your second COVID-19 dose.
- You can get your MMR vaccine four weeks before your first COVID-19 dose or four weeks after your second COVID-19 dose.

If your vaccine appointments are close together, you should get your COVID-19 vaccine first and talk to your doctor about moving your other appointment.

Find out more

- Be aware of untrue information on social media and other places.
- Getting the right information matters. Always go to trusted sources of information.
- You can get accurate and trusted information at health.govt.nz/covid-vaccine and covid19.govt.nz/vaccine

This includes alternative formats such as Braille, audio, large print, Easy Read, New Zealand Sign Language, and translations.

Stay healthy and safe

The COVID-19 vaccine is one way to keep you safe from COVID-19. You must still:

- Stay home if you're sick
- Wipe down all commonly used surfaces
- Wash or sanitise your hands
- Wear a mask on public transport if you are able to
- If you have COVID-19 symptoms, get a test
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Keep track of where you go – you can write this down or use the NZ COVID Tracer app; turn on Bluetooth on your phone.

End of COVID-19 Vaccine information.