



Your COVID-19 vaccination

Everything you need to know
about the Pfizer vaccine

When you get vaccinated, you're not just protecting yourself. You're also doing your bit by reducing the risk of passing on COVID-19 to your whānau, friends and community. The COVID-19 vaccine is free and available to everyone aged 5 years and over in Aotearoa – however the information contained in this brochure is only for those aged 12 and over.



What is a vaccine?

Vaccines protect you and help stop you getting sick. You may have already had some vaccines such as the flu 'jab' or a measles vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccine works by teaching your body to fight the virus. **The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19.**

Getting your vaccination



A healthcare worker will do a health check with you and answer your questions.



You can say yes or no to getting the vaccine. If you are 12-15, we recommend discussing the vaccination with your whānau or a trusted support person, and your parent or caregiver can provide consent if you prefer.



A fully trained health care worker will give you the vaccine in your upper arm. You will need to relax and sit still. You can look away or close your eyes if you are feeling nervous.



You will need to stay for at least 15 minutes to make sure you are ok.



Once a health care worker is confident that you're fine and you are feeling ok, you can carry on with your day.

After your vaccination

You will be asked to get your second dose of the vaccine after a gap of three weeks or more. If you are over 18, you should get a booster dose a few months later to make sure you have the best protection against COVID-19.

If you feel unwell or are worried about any side effects, speak with your trusted health professional.

Potential side effects of Pfizer vaccine

How I might feel

You may experience some side effects, such as muscle aches, pain at the injection site or headaches. For most people these are mild effects that may not last long or impact on their day-to-day activities.

Rare side effects

Allergic reactions

There are some side effects that are more serious but rare, like a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis. This is the reason people are observed for around 15 minutes post vaccination. Vaccinators are trained to manage these reactions if they occur.

Myocarditis and Pericarditis

Myocarditis is inflammation of the heart muscle, while pericarditis is inflammation of the tissue forming a sac around the heart. These conditions are usually caused by viral infections (including COVID-19), but they are also very rare and serious side effects of the Pfizer vaccine.

Symptoms of myocarditis or pericarditis linked to the vaccine generally appear within a few days, and mostly within the first few weeks after having the vaccine. If you get any of these new symptoms after your vaccination, you should seek medical help, especially if these symptoms don't go away:

- tightness, heaviness, discomfort or pain in your chest or neck
- difficulty breathing or catching your breath
- feeling faint or dizzy or light-headed
- fluttering, racing or pounding heart, or feeling like it is 'skipping beats'.

If you feel any of these symptoms in the days or weeks after the vaccine, you should see a doctor. There will be no charge for the consultation. You can also call Healthline on **0800 358 5453** anytime to get advice.

If you are very worried about your health, call **111**, and make sure you tell them you've had a COVID-19 vaccination, or have or had COVID-19 so they can assess you properly.

You can report any side effects you experience at **report.vaccine.covid19.govt.nz**

Keep up good habits



Wear a mask or face covering when out and about.



Use the NZ COVID Tracer app to keep a record of where you've been.



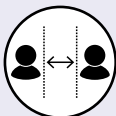
Stay home if you are sick and contact Healthline or talk to your parent or guardian about getting a test.



Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser.



Cough and sneeze into your elbow.



Keep physically distanced.

Is the vaccine safe?

The Pfizer vaccine has been thoroughly assessed for safety by our own Medsafe experts.

Medsafe only grants consent for using a vaccine in Aotearoa once they're satisfied it has met strict standards for safety, efficacy and quality.

This is the same process used to assess other medicines, like the flu vaccine.

There have been no shortcuts taken in granting approval.

The Pfizer vaccine has been used successfully by millions worldwide.

It continues to be monitored for safety.

What health information do I need to share?

If you have had an allergic reaction to any vaccine or injection in the past, please tell your vaccinator.

If you are taking any medications or have a bleeding disorder, talk to your health provider first.

Getting the right information matters



Be aware of incorrect or second-hand information on social media and other places.

You can get accurate and trusted information at:

- COVID Vaccination Healthline on 0800 28 26 29 (8am to 8pm, 7 days a week)
- Covid19.govt.nz
- Health.govt.nz/covid-vaccine
- karawhiua.nz
- or talk with your doctor.

How can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

If you are 12-15 you might want to ask your parent or guardian to help book your appointment.

Visit **BookMyVaccine.nz** where you can either book an appointment or find out where a drop-in centre is (you do not need an appointment – just turn up!).

If you're unable to book online, you can call the **COVID Vaccination Healthline** on **0800 28 26 29** (8am to 8pm, 7 days a week) and we'll make the booking for you and answer any questions. Interpretation services are available if you need them.