

Answers to your COVID-19 vaccine questions



Here are the answers to your frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, the plan, and how it will roll out for our whānau and our communities:

Is the vaccine safe?

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

Medsafe is New Zealand's medicines safety authority. Medsafe only grants consent for a vaccine to be used in Aotearoa New Zealand 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 for the Pfizer vaccine.

It's already been used successfully all around the world by millions of people, and by hundreds of thousands here in New Zealand. The vaccine continues to be monitored closely for safety.

How effective is the vaccine, and what does 95% mean?

The COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective if people have both doses. Studies show that about 95% of people who receive both doses of the vaccine are protected against getting COVID-19 symptoms. That means once you are fully vaccinated, you are far less likely to fall seriously ill.

It's the best way to protect you, your whānau and your community.

Is the vaccine effective against new variants?

Early indications are positive that the Pfizer vaccine works well against new variants of the virus, still preventing severe disease, hospitalisation and death. Further research will help us understand how effective it is against each of the variants.

Getting the vaccine remains our best protection against the virus, in all its forms.

Do we have enough vaccine?

Yes. Pfizer, our vaccine supplier, has confirmed New Zealand will receive 1 million doses of the vaccine in July. That means we can keep going with our plan.

However, delivery is weighted to the end of July so our stocks will be tight until then. We are carefully managing our way through this.

We continue to focus our efforts on Group 1 (border workers), Group 2 (people at high risk) and Group 3 (people over 65). The rate of new bookings will remain steady until the end of July when we will scale up and begin vaccinating everyone else in New Zealand aged 16 and over.

Even with tight supply, we will deliver more than half a million doses of the vaccine over the next five weeks. By comparison, it took us three months to deliver the first 500,000 doses.

Group 3 update

We know some people in Group 3 (people over the age of 65, pregnant people and people with disabilities and some health conditions) are anxious as to when they will receive their vaccination. District health boards (DHBs) will ensure people in this group are vaccinated or receive a vaccination invitation by the end of July.

Beware COVID-19 vaccine scams

The Pfizer vaccine is free to everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand. Do not share your bank details with anyone offering you the vaccine for a fee. Scams should be reported to CERT NZ at <https://cert.govt.nz/covid-19-vaccine-scams>

Remember

It's important to keep all the other safety precautions going too. From scanning the NZ COVID Tracer app to washing hands, all our health precautions matter.

Thank you Aotearoa New Zealand

Getting the vaccine is the best way to protect you and your whānau.

Find out more at [Covid19.govt.nz](https://covid19.govt.nz)

New Zealand Government

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COVID-19**