

Answers to your COVID-19 Vaccine Questions

Answers to your most frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, the plan, and how it will roll out for our whānau and our communities.

How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?

The Pfizer vaccine teaches your own immune system to recognise and fight off the virus. The vaccine can't give you the disease. It does not contain the virus itself, or anything that can affect your DNA. The vaccine is gone completely from your body within a few days, leaving your immune system stronger, and ready for action if COVID-19 comes near you.

How were the COVID-19 vaccines created so quickly but also safely?

Creating the COVID-19 vaccines took a global effort. The world united to take on the challenge. We didn't have to start from scratch. Similar research was already well underway for similar diseases.

As a result, the vaccines could be made faster, whilst still ensuring they went through all the safety checks.

How has the COVID-19 vaccine made our borders stronger?

Our border is our first line of defence against COVID-19. We've already rolled out the vaccine to border and MIQ workers, and the people they live with. By shielding those most at risk of catching COVID-19 in their workplace, we reduce the risk of future outbreaks, and lockdowns.

What happens when you get the vaccine?

You'll be asked to confirm who you are by answering some simple questions. Getting the vaccine is your choice, so you'll be asked to give your consent. Remember, you can ask questions at any time. A fully-trained vaccinator will give you the vaccine in your upper arm. You'll need to stay for at least 20 minutes so we can make sure you're okay. You might experience some mild side-effects 1-2 days after getting your vaccination.

This is common, and a sign that your body is learning to fight the virus. We'll record your visit in the COVID Immunisation Register. Getting two doses of the vaccine, at least 21 days apart, is important to give you the best protection. Be sure to check your second vaccination is booked, and keep a note of where and when your second appointment takes place.

Is it safe to take the COVID-19 vaccine when pregnant or breastfeeding?

Based on how the vaccine works, experts believe it is as safe for pregnant people as for everyone else. The Pfizer vaccine doesn't contain the live virus, so can't give you or your baby COVID-19 – but it can offer protection against the disease for you and your baby.

As with all vaccinations, be sure to talk to your midwife, GP or healthcare professional before you get the vaccine, to make sure you have the right information for you and your baby. It is also safe for you and your baby to breast-feed after you've been vaccinated.

When do you get vaccinated?

You can see what vaccination group you are in at [Covid19.govt.nz/vaccines](https://www.covid19.govt.nz/vaccines) Group 2 are currently being vaccinated. If you are in Group 2 you don't need to do anything. You will be contacted directly to book your appointment. This will most likely be by your employer or health provider.

Each district health board (DHB) is managing the rollout of vaccine in their area. So exactly how and when people are contacted may differ between regions. In some cases, we're still working out the details. If you are in Groups 3 or 4, you don't need to do anything for now. We'll let you know when it's your turn.

Whatever group you are in, the vaccine is free for everyone aged 16 and over, and no-one will miss out.



Find out more about the Pfizer vaccine, and how it works at [Covid19.govt.nz/vaccines](https://www.covid19.govt.nz/vaccines)