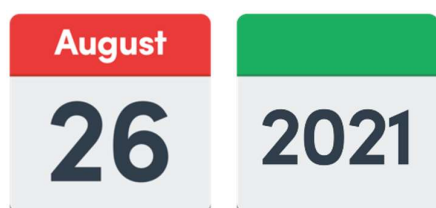




An Easy Read guide to the COVID-19 vaccine

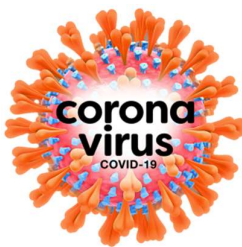


Updated: 26 August 2021

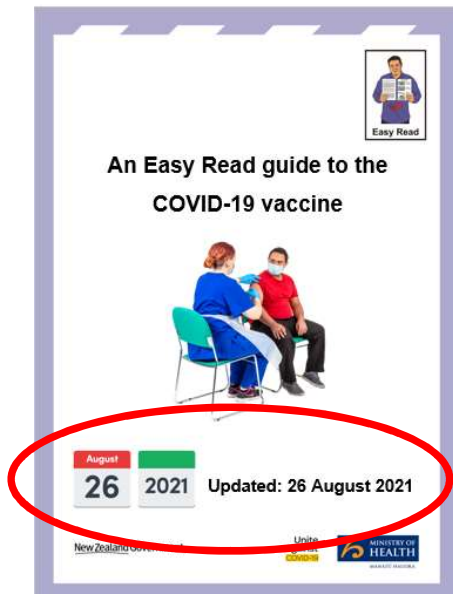
Before you read this



This guide tells you about the things you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine as at **26 August 2021**.



We know things are changing all the time as we learn more about COVID-19.



We will update this document as soon as we know more.

We will change the date on the front cover so you know it has been updated.



Please check the COVID-19 **website** for updates:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/easy-read/>

What you will find in here

Page number:



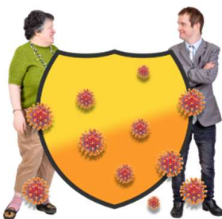
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What is COVID-19?

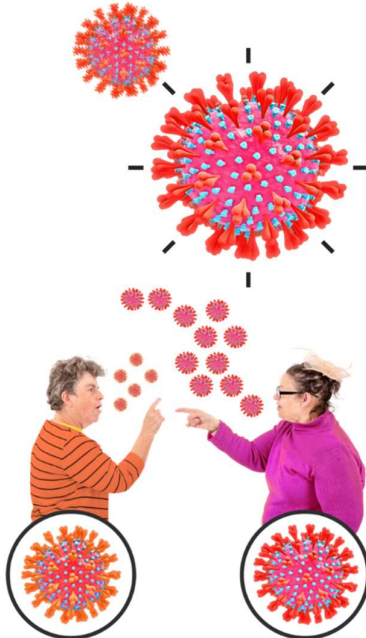


COVID-19 is a virus that can make people sick.



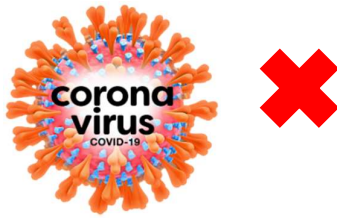
COVID-19 is sometimes called:

- coronavirus
- the **Delta variant**.

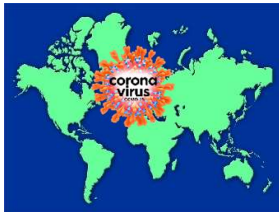


The **Delta variant**:

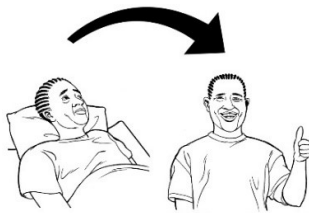
- can also make people sick
- spreads **very** easily between people.



Here in New Zealand we have all worked hard to stop COVID-19.



COVID-19 is still a very big problem in many countries around the world.



Most people get better after COVID-19.



Some people have to go hospital.

Many people in other countries have died of COVID-19.



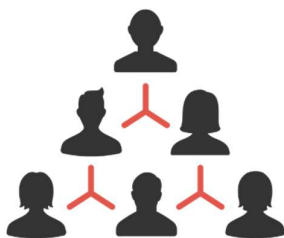
Sadly some people in New Zealand have also died from COVID-19.

What are the signs of COVID-19?



If you get COVID-19 you may:

- have a cough
- have a high temperature of at least 38°C on a thermometer – this is when you would feel very hot
- find it hard to breathe
- have a sore throat
- sneeze and have a runny nose
- not be able to smell or taste things for a little while.



COVID-19 passes from person to person.

What is the COVID-19 vaccine?



There is a **vaccine** that will help protect us against COVID-19.



A **vaccine** helps your body to make **antibodies**.



Antibodies help your body to fight off sickness.

Most vaccines are an injection that is given in your arm.



Vaccines can help stop you from getting sick.

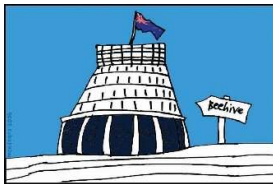


Some vaccines that you may have had before are the:

- flu vaccine
- measles vaccine.



The Government is would like everyone to get the COVID-19 vaccine to help keep us all safe.



The Government has bought enough COVID-19 vaccines for everyone living in:



- New Zealand
- some of the Pacific Islands.



Everyone over the age of **12 years old** can have the COVID-19 vaccine if they want it.



The COVID-19 vaccine is given as 2 injections on different days.



The COVID-19 vaccine is **free**.



This means it will not cost you any money to get the COVID-19 vaccine.



If you choose to visit your doctor to have your COVID-19 vaccine you will not need to pay for the appointments.

Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?



The **COVID-19 vaccines** will help protect you from getting sick with COVID-19.



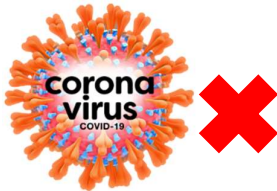
It will also help protect other people like:

- your family
- your friends
- other people in your community.



The more people who get the COVID-19 vaccine the more likely we can help stop the spread of COVID-19

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



You **cannot** get COVID-19 from the vaccine.



We know it can help stop you from really feeling sick from COVID-19.



We know it can help keep down the number of people who get COVID-19.



We do not know for certain how well the vaccine stops you passing on COVID-19 to other people.



Even after you have the vaccine it is still important to:

- cover your mouth when you cough
- sneeze into a tissue
- wash and dry your hands.



Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?



The COVID-19 vaccine have been checked by **Medsafe**.



Medsafe:

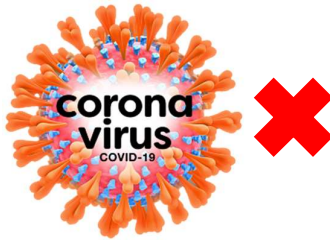
- is **not** part of the companies that make the vaccines
- checks everything very carefully to make sure the vaccine is safe to give to people.



Medsafe have said the COVID-19 vaccines are safe to use.



The vaccine has already been given to millions of people around the world.



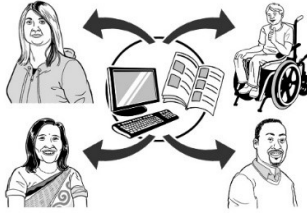
You **cannot** get COVID-19 from the vaccine.



Some people are worried because the vaccine was made so fast.



The reason it was made so fast was because people in different countries worked together to make a vaccine.



People who worked on the vaccine shared:

- information
- money they got to work on the vaccine.



This meant they could:

- work faster
- still be sure the vaccine was safe.



Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine?



Medsafe have said the COVID-19 vaccine is for people **12 years of age and older.**



Children under the age of 12 years old are not able to get the vaccine at the moment.



There has not yet been enough testing of the COVID-19 vaccine on children under 12 years old.



You should talk to your doctor or midwife about the COVID-19 vaccine if you are:



- pregnant
- breastfeeding.



Tell the person who gives you the vaccine if you:



- take medicine that makes your blood thinner
- have a condition that affects your bleeding



- have ever had an **allergic reaction** to any vaccine or injection.



An **allergic reaction** is when you get ill because of something like:

- medicine
- food.



You should also talk to your family doctor / GP if you are worried about getting the vaccine because of:

- your health
- medicines you take.



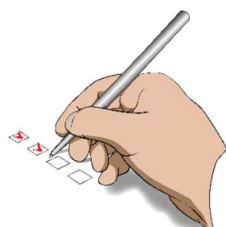
Do you have to have the COVID-19 vaccine?



The more people who get the COVID-19 vaccine the better it will be for everyone.



The Government is **not** making it **mandatory** to have the COVID-19 vaccine.



Mandatory means you have to do something.



Not mandatory means you decide if you want to do something.



It will be **your** decision if you want to have the COVID-19 vaccine.



You do not have to get the COVID-19 vaccine if you do not want to get it.



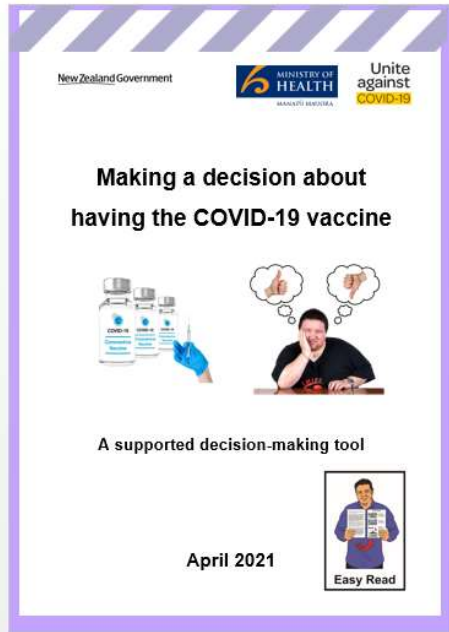
If you are not sure or are worried about the COVID-19 vaccine you can talk to someone about it.



Some people you could talk to are your:

- family
- support worker
- doctor.





There is an Easy Read booklet called:

**Making a decision about having the COVID-19 vaccine:
A supported decision-making tool.**

You can find this booklet on the COVID-19 website:

www.covid19.govt.nz/easy-read/



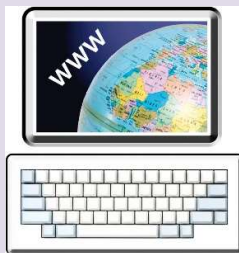
Booking your COVID-19 vaccine



To book your COVID-19 vaccine appointments you can use:

Book My Vaccine

Book My Vaccine.



The **website** address for the Book My Vaccine tool is:

www.bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz



COVID Vaccine Healthline.



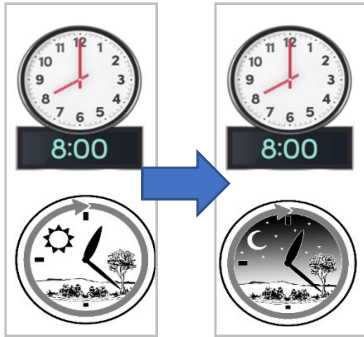
The COVID Vaccination Healthline **phone number** is:

0800 28 29 26.



The COVID Vaccination Healthline is open:

- every day
- from **8am** in the morning to **8pm** at night.



If you find it hard to use the phone you may be able to use the **New Zealand Relay Service**.



You can find more about the New Zealand Relay service at the **website**:

www.nzrelay.co.nz



Some **doctors** and **pharmacies** are also able to give people their COVID-19 vaccine.



You can call your doctor or pharmacy to find out if you can book an appointment with them to have your COVID-19 vaccine.

Getting your COVID-19 vaccine



There will be different places you can get your vaccine to make it as easy as possible for everyone.



Some of these places may be:

- Māori and Pasifika providers
- doctors
- pop-up vaccination centres
- pharmacy
- medical or hauora centres
- drive-through vaccination centres.



You will need to book an appointment to have your COVID-19 vaccine.



You can take a support person with you to your vaccine appointment.

A support person could be:

- family
- friend
- support worker.



You can ask for an interpreter to be at your appointment.

You can also let the person giving you the vaccine know if you have any:

- communication needs
- support needs.





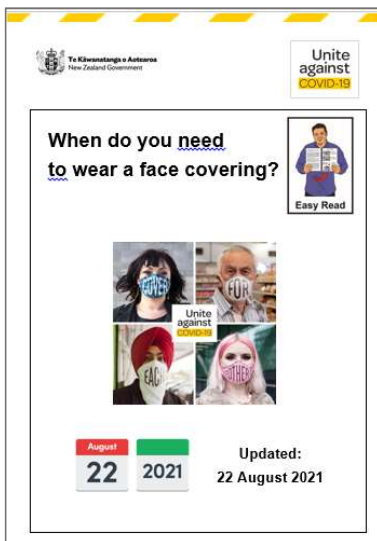
You may be asked to wear a face covering while you are at your vaccine appointments.



If you find it hard to wear a face covering because of a disability or health condition you can show your **face covering exemption card**.

There is an Easy Read booklet called:

When do you need to wear a face covering?



This booklet also has information about the **face covering exemption card**.



You find this booklet at the COVID-19 **website**:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/easy-read/>



The person giving your vaccine is called a **vaccinator**.

The vaccinator will:

- ask some questions to check your health
- give you some information.



You will need to agree to get the vaccine.



If you say **Yes** to get the vaccine the vaccinator will give you the vaccine.



You will need to:

- relax
- sit still.



If you are feeling nervous you can:

- close your eyes
- look away from your arm
- listen to music
- talk to someone who supports you
- look at your phone or iPad.



When you get the vaccine:



- the vaccinator will roll up your sleeve
- the vaccinator will clean your arm with a cold wet wipe



- you may feel a pinch when the needle goes in
- the vaccine will be quick
- the vaccinator will cover the place where the needle went in with:



- a band-aid
- tape and a cotton ball



After your vaccine you will need to stay for 15 minutes.

This is so the vaccinator can check that you are okay after getting your vaccine.



Your support person can stay with you.



Once the vaccinator says you are okay you can leave.

COVID-19 vaccine record card

This card provides a record of the vaccines you have received.

New Zealand Government

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine visit:
covid19.govt.nz/vaccines
 or call the COVID Vaccination Healthline on: 0800 28 29 26

United Against COVID-19

Ministry of Health

Name:

1 Vaccine: Pfizer/BioNTech Date given: / /

Remember to attend your appointment to have your second dose of vaccine. You will have the best protection after two doses.

2 Second appointment date:

Time: Location:

Vaccine: Pfizer/BioNTech Date given: / /

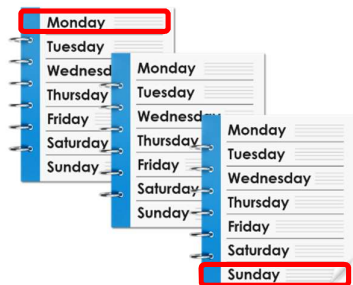
Before you go you will be given a vaccine card that has the date and time of your next vaccine appointment.



The COVID-19 vaccine is given as 2 injections on different days.



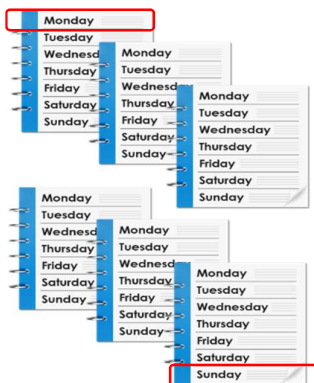
You will be able to decide on how long the gap between your 2 COVID-19 vaccine injections will be.



You can decide to:

- have a gap of at least 3 weeks between your COVID-19 vaccine injections

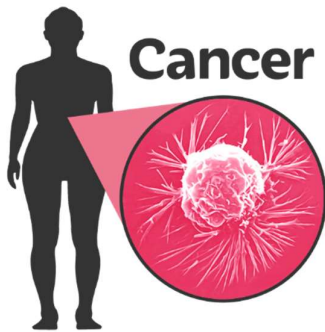
or



- make the gap between your COVID-19 vaccine injections 6 weeks or more.



It is important to bring your vaccine card to your second vaccine appointment.



Some people may decide they want only a 3 week gap between their COVID-19 vaccine if they are:

- having medical treatment for things like cancer
- taking medication that makes it harder for them to not get sick from COVID-19.



If you are not sure about making a decision about the gap between your COVID-19 vaccines you can talk to:

- your doctor or pharmacy
- call the COVID Vaccine Healthline on **0800 28 29 26**
- your family or friends.



After having the COVID-19 vaccine



Some people can have an allergic reaction after a vaccine.

Staying for 15 minutes after your vaccine means the healthcare workers can make sure you:

- are ok
- do not have any reactions.



If you do have a reaction the vaccinators are trained to treat you.



Some people may have side effects when they get the vaccine.



Side effects are ways the vaccine makes you feel unwell.

There are many medicines that can have side effects.



The most common side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine are:

- a headache
- feeling tired
- a sore arm from the injection.



If you have a sore arm you can put a cold cloth or ice pack on it to feel better.

For most people side effects from the vaccine:



- are not too bad
- do not last long.

If you are worried about how you feel after your vaccine:



- talk to your doctor
- phone Healthline on:



0800 358 5453.



If you think you are very sick you can call 111 for an ambulance.

Getting other vaccines



You have to get your COVID-19 vaccine at different times to other vaccines such as:

- flu vaccine
- MMR vaccine – this is the measles mumps and rubella vaccine.



This is so if you get any side effects your doctor can tell which vaccine made you unwell.

If you need to get a **flu vaccine** you must get it:



- 2 weeks or more before your first COVID-19 injection

or



- 2 weeks or more after your second COVID-19 injection.

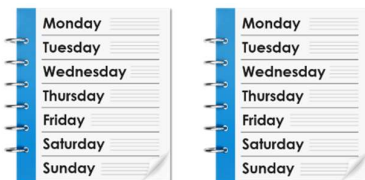


If you need to get an **MMR vaccine** you must get it:



- 4 weeks or more before your first COVID-19 injection

or



- 2 weeks or more after your second COVID-19 injection.



If you have vaccine appointments that are too close together you should:

- get your COVID-19 vaccine first
- talk to your doctor about moving the other appointments.



Stay healthy and safe



The vaccine is 1 way of keeping safe from COVID-19.



We do not know yet if getting the vaccine will stop you giving COVID-19 to other people.



You must still get a test if you have any signs of COVID-19.



You can read about the COVID-19 signs on page 6.



You must still:

- stay home if you are sick
- wash your hands or use hand sanitiser
- wipe down surfaces like the kitchen bench
- if you cough:
 - use a tissue
 - cough into your elbow.

You should also keep track of where you go by:

- using the NZ COVID Tracer app with Bluetooth turned on if you can
- writing down where you go.



If you travel on public transport you will need to wear a face covering.



If you are unable to wear a face covering you can show your **face covering exemption card** if you have one.

Where to find more information about the COVID-19 vaccine



It is important to be careful to get information from places you can trust.



Be careful about information in places like social media as it can be hard to tell if it is true.

You can get information from:

- **Ministry of Health** website:



<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines>



- **Unite against COVID-19** website:

www.covid19.govt.nz/vaccines



You can also talk to your doctor or vaccinator if you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.



**This information has been written
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