

# Making a decision about having the COVID-19 vaccine

Being vaccinated is the best way to protect ourselves, our whānau and communities against COVID-19. This is especially true for many disabled people and people with health conditions.

The Ministry of Health recognises that getting a vaccination is a different journey for disabled people and people with health conditions.

Everyone should have the opportunity to take an active role in making decisions about their emotional wellbeing and their physical health.

In this factsheet you'll find guidance and tools on making a decision about the COVID-19 vaccine. The guidance and decision-making tools are also available in EasyRead formats online at the links provided in the following sections.

To find out more about the COVID-19 vaccine, have a look at information available online:

- [health.govt.nz/InfoForDisabledPeople](https://health.govt.nz/InfoForDisabledPeople)
- [karawhiua.nz](https://karawhiua.nz)

## About the vaccine

The Pfizer vaccine has been thoroughly assessed for safety by New Zealand's Medsafe experts and international medical safety agencies.

You can find out how the vaccine works at [COVID-19: How the vaccine works | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

The COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective if people have both doses. Studies show around 95 percent of people who have received both doses of the vaccine are protected against getting COVID-19 symptoms. Once you are fully vaccinated you are far less likely to fall seriously ill and less likely to transmit the virus to others.

It's very important you get both doses of the vaccine to give you the best protection against the virus. You should get them 6 weeks apart or more.

You can find information on side effects and reactions to the vaccine in the [COVID-19: Vaccine side effects and reactions](#) section of the Ministry of Health website website, or read the factsheet 'Your safety and side effects questions answered'.

Depending on your previous experiences with other vaccinations you may like to plan to take it easy for a few days after the COVID-19 vaccination to allow time to recover – and if you live alone, to arrange to have someone check in on you.

## Resources to help you decide

There's a COVID-19 decision making tool available. You can fill in the tool yourself and take it with you to your vaccination appointment.

We recommend discussing the vaccination with your whānau or a trusted support person, particularly if you're 12–15 years old. You can find information about the vaccine on the Ministry of Health website and ask questions of a health professional before getting the vaccine or at your appointment. Parents or caregivers can provide consent if preferred.

### Resource to download:

Making a decision about having the COVID-19 vaccine: [Decision-making tool](#).

## Resources to help others decide

There are also resources you can use to help someone else make a decision about the COVID-19 vaccine. This includes three guidance tools about supported decision-making.

Supported decision-making is an important process for people who need assistance to make important decisions. Your support may be needed because a person has particular communication needs, a learning disability, an

acquired brain injury, neurodiverse needs, mental health issues or other cognitive or physical conditions.

Supported decision-making ensures the person who needs support is at the centre of decisions that concern them. It is a way for people to make their own decisions based on their own preferences and have control of their life.

You can choose from the list below the guidance tool or combination of tools that best suit the communication profile of the person you're supporting.

## Resources to download

- Full supported decision-making guidance (includes all three decision-making tools)
- **Guidance Tool 1 for supporting people whose:**
  - understanding of language is limited to daily/weekly routines/activities and plain language
  - wants and needs are interpreted by watching their facial expressions, body movement etc.
- **Guidance Tool 2 for supporting people whose:**
  - understanding is limited to routines and they are aware of routine changes
  - use of language is purposeful and they can communicate using body language or facial expression
  - may communicate distress when change is not communicated appropriately to them.
- **Guidance Tool 3 for supporting people who:**
  - are aware of time and will understand their schedule and changes made to it
  - may be able to communicate their concern, frustration and/or distress to family/whānau and support workers
  - may need support to manage the volume of information they are being exposed to
  - may need support to understand medical jargon and unfamiliar vocabulary
  - may need support to understand the context of the information to reduce anxiety.

## Where to download resources

You can download the guidance and tools outlined here from the Ministry of Health website: [www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-easy-read-information](http://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-easy-read-information)

## Other support available

If you're supporting someone with a disability to decide about the COVID-19 vaccine, you'll find information and a free e-learning module for whānau and support workers in the **Preparing for the COVID-19 Vaccination** section of the Healthcare New Zealand website: [www.healthcarenz.co.nz/covid-19-vaccination](http://www.healthcarenz.co.nz/covid-19-vaccination)



## Getting the right information matters.

Be aware of incorrect information on social media and other places.

You can get accurate and trusted information at:

- [Covid19.govt.nz/get-the-facts](http://Covid19.govt.nz/get-the-facts)
- [Health.govt.nz/covid-vaccine](http://Health.govt.nz/covid-vaccine)
- [karawhiua.nz](http://karawhiua.nz)
- or talk with your doctor.

To make or change an appointment go to [BookMyVaccine.nz](http://BookMyVaccine.nz) or call the COVID Vaccination Healthline on:

**0800 28 29 26**  
(8am to 8pm, 7 days a week)