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7 JULY 2021

# Second COVID-19 vaccine receives provisional approval

COVID-19 Response

New Zealand's regulatory authority Medsafe has granted provisional approval of the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for individuals 18 years of age and older, COVID-19 Minister Chris Hipkins announced today.

"New Zealand secured 2 million doses of the Janssen vaccine through an advance purchase agreement last year. We purchased a portfolio of vaccine options to provide us with flexibility, and the approval of a second COVID-19 vaccine is welcome news.

"Medsafe follows a rigorous assessment process informed by the most up to date medical and scientific data. Approval has been very carefully considered with safety the key priority.

"The medical evidence shows Janssen is a very safe and effective vaccine. It is a great addition to our vaccine options," Chris Hipkins said.

The Janssen COVID-19 vaccine has also received emergency or provisional approval in Canada, USA and Australia.

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"While our plan remains to ramp up the roll-out using the Pfizer vaccine from here, having the option of the Janssen vaccine increases our choices and provides us with flexibility if we need it. As a single dose vaccine, it may be useful in hard to reach locations or emergencies, or for those who cannot get the Pfizer vaccine."

New Zealand is already receiving significant deliveries of the Pfizer vaccine and has secured enough doses of the Pfizer vaccine for the population of New Zealand and our Pacific neighbours, in 2021.

"Provisional approval is the first step in the process. Cabinet will weigh up the options on the best use of the Janssen vaccine following advice from officials. A Cabinet 'decision to use' can be expected sometime in August," Chris Hipkins said.

"Our roll out of the COVID-19 immunisation programme is well under way and we have a plan to offer a Pfizer vaccine to everyone in New Zealand by the end of the year.

"It's good to have a range of options to access safe and effective vaccines to meet the need of New Zealanders now and in the future."

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