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What you need to know about medicines / Vaccines: Pharmac's role / COVID-19 vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines

Pharmac is responsible for the management of COVID-19 vaccines. This includes funding, procurement, and supply.

COVID-19 vaccine access criteria

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Current strain LP.8.1 vaccine

From 2 March 2026, the COVID-19 vaccine for people aged 12 or over will be moving to Comirnaty LP.8.1. The vaccine for children has already moved to Comirnaty LP.8.1 and the vaccine for infants will change during February.

Who can get vaccinated?

The criteria for funded access to the vaccine hasn't changed. You can find the criteria for first and additional doses of the vaccine on the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

[Community Schedule: COVID-19 vaccines\(external link\)](#) ^[Link: 1]

[Hospital Schedule: COVID-19 vaccines\(external link\)](#) ^[Link: 2]

We would consult publicly before making any changes to these criteria.

Pharmac's role

Funding for COVID-19 vaccines transferred to Pharmac from Ministry of Health (Manatū Hauora) on 1 July 2023. Pharmac's budget has been adjusted to cover the COVID-19 vaccines. The vaccines were funded separately as part of New Zealand's broader COVID-19 response.

Pharmac is managing the purchase of COVID-19 vaccines using the same process it does for other medicines and vaccines.

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Pfizer's Comirnaty vaccine funded until 2027

Pharmac has confirmed with Pfizer that it will continue funding the Comirnaty brand of COVID-19 vaccine.

From 1 February 2026, Comirnaty will remain the main funded COVID-19 vaccine in Aotearoa New Zealand until at least 30 September 2027, with options to extend through to 2029.

[Decision to award principal supply for COVID-19 vaccine](#) ^[Link: 3]

[Proposal to award Principal Supply for the COVID-19 vaccine](#) ^[Link: 4]

[Request for proposals – supply of COVID-19 vaccine](#) ^[Link: 5]

The roles of other health agencies

Ministry of Health

The Ministry maintains New Zealand's strategic framework for managing COVID-19. Vaccination is a key public health measure within the framework.

The Ministry is also responsible for New Zealand's general pandemic preparedness.

[COVID-19 on the Ministry of Health's website\(external link\)](#) ^[Link: 6]

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora

Health New Zealand remains responsible for the vaccination programme for COVID-19.

[Book your vaccination today_| Health NZ website\(external link\)](#) ^[Link: 7]

Medsafe

Medsafe reviews all vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccines, to assess whether they meet New Zealand standards of safety, quality, and effectiveness before approving their use in New Zealand. Medsafe also monitors adverse reactions (negative side effects) from all medicines, including vaccines.

[Medsafe website\(external link\)](#) ^[Link: 8]

Who to contact

If you have questions about the funding of COVID-19 vaccines, email enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz ^[Link: 9]

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1. <https://schedule.pharmac.govt.nz/ScheduleOnline.php?edition=&osq=COVID-19+vaccine>
 2. <https://schedule.pharmac.govt.nz/HMLOnline.php?edition=&osq=COVID-19+vaccine>
 3. <https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/news-and-resources/consultations-and-decisions/decision-to-award-principal-supply-for-covid-19-vaccine>
 4. <https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/news-and-resources/consultations-and-decisions/2025-05-covid-19-vaccine>
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 6. <https://www.health.govt.nz/strategies-initiatives/programmes-and-initiatives/covid-19>
 7. <https://info.health.nz/immunisations/vaccines-aotearoa/covid-19-vaccines>
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