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Health NZ, 2026

Getting COVID-19 vaccines

Te whiwhi kano ārai mate KOWHEORI-19

The COVID-19 vaccine is free for everyone aged 5 and over in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is also free for some children under 5 with certain medical conditions.

Ongoing free additional COVID-19 vaccines are available for people aged 30 and over who are eligible for healthcare in New Zealand. People at higher risk of severe illness benefit most from additional doses. Talk to your healthcare provider to see if this is recommended for you.

Overview of COVID-19 vaccines

- Ongoing free additional COVID-19 vaccines doses are available for people aged 30 and over who are eligible for healthcare in New Zealand.
- People at higher risk of severe illness benefit most from additional doses.
- If you are not sure what is recommended for you, talk to your healthcare provider or vaccinator.

COVID-19 vaccine recommendations are based on several factors, including age, time since last dose and if you have certain medical conditions. New recommendations are made based on the changing COVID-19 situation.

What the COVID-19 vaccines protect you from

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can affect your lungs, airways and other organs. While many people experience mild symptoms, COVID-19 can cause severe illness and lead to hospitalisation, especially for people at higher risk.

Evidence shows that people who have had COVID-19 and have also been immunised have the strongest protection against severe illness.

If you are immunised, you are less likely to become seriously unwell if you get COVID-19.

If you have had COVID-19

You should still get your recommended COVID-19 vaccinations, even if you have already had COVID-19. Vaccination helps protect you against severe illness and may reduce the risk of long COVID.

Most people should wait 6 months after testing positive before getting their next dose. Some people at higher risk of severe illness may be able to get another dose sooner than 6 months.

How many COVID-19 vaccines to get and when

The number of COVID-19 vaccines recommended depends on your age and whether you are at higher risk of severe illness.

Talk to your healthcare provider or vaccinator about your situation and what they recommend for you.

Ages 6 months to 4 years

Tamariki aged 6 months to 4 years can get the COVID-19 vaccine if they are at higher risk of severe illness.

- They are recommended to have 3 doses of the infant COVID-19 vaccine.
- The first and second doses are given 3 weeks apart.
- The third dose is given at least 8 weeks after the second dose.

Healthy tamariki in this age group are not eligible for COVID-19 immunisation.

Ages 5 to 15

Healthy children aged 5 to 15 are recommended and eligible for one initial dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Additional doses may be recommended for those at higher risk of severe illness.

Ages 16 to 29

Healthy people aged 16 to 29 are recommended and eligible for one initial dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Additional doses may be recommended for those at higher risk of severe illness.

Ages 30 and over

Healthy people aged 30 and over, who are eligible for healthcare in New Zealand, are recommended and eligible for one initial dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Additional COVID-19 vaccine doses may be recommended for those at higher risk of severe illness. All people aged 30 years and over can receive free additional doses if they request it.

Talk to your healthcare provider to see if this is recommended for you.

Additional COVID-19 vaccine doses for healthy people aged 5 years and over

The table below shows how often additional COVID-19 vaccine doses are recommended for **healthy** people, based on age.

Age	Previously vaccinated
75 years and over	Twice yearly, from 6 months after previous dose
65 to 74 years	One dose annually
30 to 64 years	Not generally recommended — there are some exceptions ¹

Age	Previously vaccinated
16 to 29 years	Not generally recommended for healthy people ²
5 to 15 years	Not eligible for healthy children

COVID-19 vaccines for people at higher risk of severe illness

People at higher risk of severe illness includes:

- people who are severely immunocompromised
- people who have certain long-term medical conditions
- people who live with disability with complex health needs
- people who live in aged or disability care facilities
- some people who are pregnant
- adults aged 65 years and over
- Māori or Pacific people aged 50 and over.

Talk to your healthcare provider, vaccinator or specialist for guidance on when you should be immunised.

COVID-19 vaccines for specific groups

If you have an underlying health condition

People aged 12 and over with some medical conditions are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and are encouraged to get immunised.

This includes conditions such as:

- serious respiratory disease
- heart conditions

- diabetes
- kidney disease
- cancer
- immunocompromised conditions
- some mental health conditions.

If you are not sure what is recommended for you, talk to your healthcare provider.

If you have cancer

If you have cancer, you may be at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. You can get a COVID-19 vaccine while receiving cancer treatment. There is no evidence that the vaccine interacts with cancer treatments. Your healthcare team can help you decide the best timing for immunisation.

If you have HIV

If you have HIV, you are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Evidence shows the COVID-19 vaccine is safe for people living with HIV. If you are newly diagnosed or starting treatment, talk to your specialist about timing your immunisation.

If you are immunocompromised

If you are immunocompromised, you may not respond as strongly to vaccines, but immunisation still offers important protection against severe illness.

The best time to get immunised is before planned immunosuppression, if possible. Do not delay treatment — talk to your healthcare provider for advice.

If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning a pregnancy

If you have not been vaccinated you can get a COVID-19 vaccine at any time during your pregnancy, while breastfeeding, or planning a pregnancy. Immunisation helps protect you from severe illness and also helps protect your pēpi.

If you have been vaccinated, your healthcare provider may recommend an additional vaccine if you are at risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

If you or a whānau member is disabled

Support is available if you or a whānau member needs help accessing COVID-19 immunisation:

- including accessible appointments
- longer booking times
- home immunisation.

Before you get immunised

If you had your first dose in another country

If you are eligible for another dose in New Zealand, you will receive the Pfizer vaccine for your next dose.

If you have had an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis

Talk to your healthcare provider or vaccinator if you have had a serious allergic reaction to a vaccine or to any ingredient in the Pfizer vaccine.

If you need help during your appointment

Support may include:

- a New Zealand Sign Language interpreter
- a language translator
- help with decision-making
- mobility assistance
- a longer appointment time
- a quiet or low-sensory environment.

Giving consent for yourself or your tamariki

You will be asked to give consent before vaccination. Your vaccinator will:

- make sure the COVID-19 vaccine is right for you
- ask if you have had a severe reactions or anaphylaxis
- ask if you have any previous medical issues including myocarditis or pericarditis.

They will give you advice about what to expect after your vaccination.

Consent for tamariki vaccines

A responsible adult must accompany tamariki to their appointment. A legal guardian must give consent for tamariki under 12.

Rangatahi aged 12 and above

Rangatahi can give their own consent, but are encouraged to discuss immunisation with their parents or whānau.

Getting your vaccine

When you arrive at your appointment, you will be asked for consent before receiving the vaccine. You will usually be asked to wait for 15 minutes afterwards.

If waiting is difficult for you, ask staff about alternative arrangements.

Which vaccine is used

The COVID-19 vaccine used in Aotearoa New Zealand for people aged 6 months and over is the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. This is the only Medsafe-approved and funded COVID-19 vaccine currently available in New Zealand.

Vaccine safety

There are strict precautions in place to help ensure the safety of all COVID-19 vaccines, including those in New Zealand.

Medsafe only grants consent for using a vaccine in Aotearoa New Zealand once they are satisfied it has met strict standards for safety.

All of the vaccines available in New Zealand have been assessed for safety and effectiveness.

[Vaccine side effects, reactions and safety](https://www.healthnz.govt.nz/health-topics/immunisations/vaccine-side-effects-reactions-and-safety) [.\(https://www.healthnz.govt.nz/health-topics/immunisations/vaccine-side-effects-reactions-and-safety\)](https://www.healthnz.govt.nz/health-topics/immunisations/vaccine-side-effects-reactions-and-safety).

Related information

Book a vaccine

Most vaccines can be booked online or over the phone. You can also contact your doctor, nurse, pharmacy or healthcare provider to book a vaccination appointment, or go to a walk-in clinic.

Book your vaccine →

(<https://www.healthnz.govt.nz/health-topics/immunisations/booking-a-vaccine>).

COVID-19 vaccine side effects and reactions

Find out about possible COVID-19 vaccine side effects and what to do if you experience them.

Vaccine side effects and reactions →

(<https://www.healthnz.govt.nz/health-topics/immunisations/vaccines-aotearoa/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-side-effects-and-reactions>).

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