

# COVID-19 vaccine frequently asked questions

## How safe is the vaccine?

Medsafe – New Zealand’s medicines safety authority – only grants consent for a vaccine to be used in Aotearoa once it is satisfied it’s safe and effective enough to use. All vaccines go through the same safety test and must meet the same robust standards. There have been no shortcuts in granting approval.

## How does the vaccine work?

The COVID-19 vaccine works by teaching your body to fight the virus and it helps protect you from getting sick. You will need two doses of the vaccine, at least 21 days apart. To ensure you have the best protection, make sure you get both doses. The vaccine does not give you COVID-19.

## What are the common side effects?

Like all medicines, the vaccine may cause side effects in some people. These are common, usually mild, don’t last long and won’t stop you from having the second dose or going about your daily life. Common side effects:

- pain, swelling or redness at the injection site
- a headache
- feeling tired or fatigued
- muscle aches
- feeling generally unwell
- chills
- fever
- joint pain
- nausea.

It’s important to wait 20 minutes after your vaccination to ensure you do not have any side effects – please speak with a health professional if you do.

## When can I get a vaccination?

Anyone 12 years and over can have the COVID vaccine. You can book in now to get your COVID-19 vaccination. Visit <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19-vaccination/bay-of-plenty/> to find a vaccination centre near you and to book your vaccine.

Book your COVID-19 vaccination at your nearest centre. Visit <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19-vaccination/bay-of-plenty/> to find a vaccination centre near you and to book your vaccine. You’ll need to get two vaccinations, at least 21 days apart. We will also be going out to whānau with a mobile site over the coming weeks and months.

## Who should not get a vaccination?

If any of the following apply to you, you will need to speak with your doctor or another health professional prior to being vaccinated:

- If you’re on blood-thinning medication
- If you’re pregnant
- If you’re receiving cancer treatment
- If you’re sick
- If you’ve had an allergic reaction to any vaccine

## Why should I get vaccinated?

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself, your whānau, and our community from COVID-19, especially those who may not be able to be immunised due to underlying health reasons.

## Is there a cost?

No. The government has bought enough doses to ensure everyone who would like one will be able to get one.

## Why is COVID-19 still a serious concern for New Zealand, and for Māori in particular?

COVID-19 continues to cause widespread devastation globally. The virus has also intensified and more infectious variants have developed.

While we have been fortunate in Aotearoa, the risk is still there and we need to do everything we can to combat it. History has shown us that Māori are particularly vulnerable to severe health impacts from COVID-19, and the way we live and work means we may also be more likely to contract it if there is an outbreak.



Stay home if you are sick



Wash or sanitise your hands



Wipe down all commonly used surfaces



Wear a mask on all public transport if you are able



If you have COVID-19 symptoms, get a test



Cover coughs and sneezes



Use the NZ COVID Tracer app to sign in to locations; turn on Bluetooth