



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government



**Unite
against
COVID-19**

Information about the COVID-19 vaccine for parents / caregivers of children aged 5 to 11 years



**Published:
31 January 2022**

Before you read this



This document tells you the things you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for children.

This information may change.



We will update this document as soon as we know more.

We will change the date on the front cover so you know it has been updated.



Please check the COVID-19 **website** for updates:

www.covid19.govt.nz

This is a long document.



While it is written in Easy Read it can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read it a few pages at a time
- ask someone to support you to understand it.



This person could be a:

- family member
- friend
- support worker.



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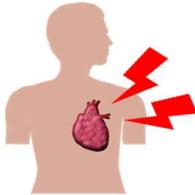


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What is the COVID-19 vaccine?



COVID-19 is a virus that can make people very sick.



The COVID-19 vaccine helps your body to make **antibodies**.



Antibodies help your body to fight off illness.



Getting the COVID-19 vaccine can protect you from getting very sick with the virus.



People who can have the COVID-19 vaccine are:

- adults
- rangatahi / young people aged 12 to 16 years
- tamariki / children aged 5 to 11 years.



Te Kaitiaki o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
MAORI WHAKAMAHI

Unite
against
COVID-19

Information about the
COVID-19 vaccine
for parents / caregivers
of children aged 5 to 11 years

Easy Read

January
31 2022

Published:
31 January 2022

This Easy Read looks at what you need to know the COVID-19 vaccine for tamariki / children aged 5 to 11 years.

What kind of COVID-19 vaccine is given to tamariki / children?



The vaccine that is given to tamariki / children in New Zealand is the child version of the Pfizer vaccine.



The child Pfizer vaccine is the same as the adult Pfizer vaccine

but



- children are given a lower dose of the vaccine than adults
- children are given a smaller amount of the vaccine than adults.



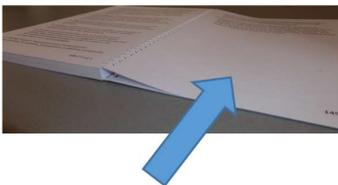
This is because studies have shown the lower dose is:

- safe for children to have
- has fewer **side effects**.



Side effects are ways the vaccine might make you feel unwell.

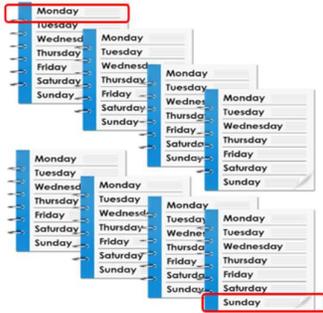
Many medicines can have side effects.



You can find more information about the kinds of side effects your child might have after getting the COVID-19 vaccine on **pages 22 to 29** of this document.



Your child needs to have **2 doses** of the child Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to be fully protected from the virus.

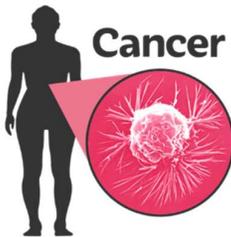


Your child should wait at least 8 weeks between dose 1 and dose 2.



Some children only need to wait 3 weeks between dose 1 and dose 2.

A 3 week gap is best for children who are:

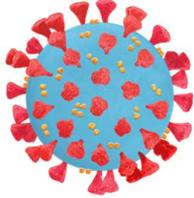


Cancer

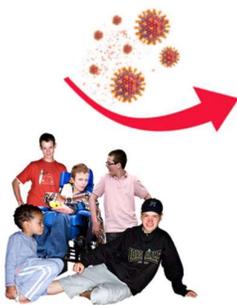
- having medical treatment for things like cancer
- taking medication that makes it more at risk of getting sick from COVID-19.



Why should tamariki / children get the COVID-19 vaccine?



COVID-19 is a very dangerous virus.



Having tamariki / children vaccinated against COVID-19 is important because it protects:

- them from getting very sick with COVID-19
- other members of your whānau / family who might get very sick with COVID-19.



For most children the **symptoms** of COVID-19 are generally the same as when they catch a cold.



Symptoms are signs that show you are sick such as:

- having a headache
- having a runny nose
- feeling sore / having aches in your body.

We do not know exactly what might happen to your child if they caught COVID-19

but

the virus does not usually make children as sick as adults.

All children who get COVID-19 are at risk of getting very sick with the virus.



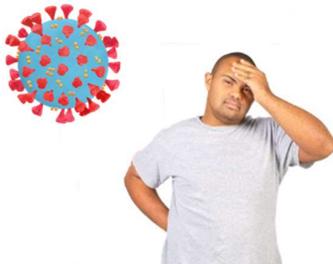
Some children may get so sick with COVID-19 that they need to go to hospital.



All children are at risk of COVID-19 making them sick with illnesses that can last a long time.



These illnesses can make them feel unwell even after they get better from the virus.

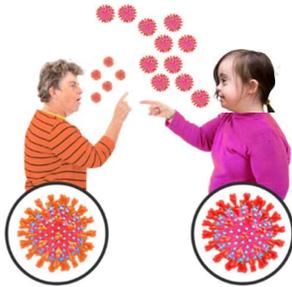


Feeling unwell for a long time after having the virus is known as **Long COVID**.



It is possible for your child to get Long COVID even if they did not get very sick from the virus.

Children who catch COVID-19 can give the virus to other people such as:



- children who are under 5 years old who are too young to get the vaccine
- people who cannot have the COVID-19 vaccine for health reasons
- people who could get very sick if they caught the virus.



The more people who get the COVID-19 vaccine the more likely it is that we can slow the spread of the virus.

How safe is the COVID-19 vaccine?



The child Pfizer vaccine is safe for children aged 5 to 11.

The vaccine has been tested in **clinical trials** with this age group.



A **clinical trial** is when a medicine is studied to make sure it is safe for people to take.



The child Pfizer vaccine has been put through a lot of tests to make sure it is as safe as any other child vaccine.



Some children may have **side effects** when they get the vaccine.

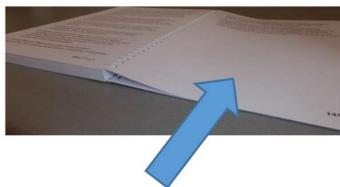


The side effects that have been seen in children who had the COVID-19 vaccine are like the side effects from other child vaccines.



The side effects seen in children after they had the COVID-19 vaccine were:

- usually not bad
- did not last very long.



There is more information about side effects on **pages 22 to 29** of this document.



The child Pfizer vaccine is safe for tamariki / children who have **food allergies**.



Food allergies are when you get ill because of something you have eaten.



The child Pfizer vaccine does not contain any:

- food
- gelatine
- latex.



The only reason a child might **not** be able to have the vaccine is if they have had a serious allergic reaction:



- to a previous dose of the COVID-19 vaccine



- to any of the ingredients that are in the vaccine.



Talk to the **vaccinator** if your tamariki / children have ever had a reaction to a vaccine



The **vaccinator** is the person who gives your child their vaccine.

Saying it is okay for your child to have the COVID-19 vaccine



Children aged 5 to 11 are too young to **consent** to having the vaccine.



Consent is when you say yes to something.



It is important that an **adult** goes with your child to their vaccine appointment so the adult can say yes to your child getting the vaccine.



An **adult** is someone who is over 18 years old.



The adult who goes with your child to their vaccine appointment could be:

- a parent of the child
- a caregiver of the child
- a legal guardian of the child.



The adult and child can ask as many questions as they like when they are at the appointment.

Supporting tamariki / children before they have the COVID-19 vaccine



There are some things you can do to support your tamariki / children before they get their vaccination.



You can:

- talk to them to help them feel relaxed about getting the vaccine
- make sure that they have had something to eat and drink before they have their vaccine
- make sure they are wearing clothes that make it easy for the vaccinator to get to their upper arm.





If your tamariki / children are nervous it is okay to take something with them to the appointment that will make them feel more relaxed such as:



- a soft toy
- another kind of toy / book that they like



- a smartphone / iPad.

Common side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine



Side effects are ways that a medicine might make you feel unwell.



It is normal to get some side effects after getting vaccinated.

The sort of common side effects your child might get after having the vaccine are things like:



- a sore arm
- some redness where the needle went into their arm



- some swelling where the needle went into their arm.



Other common side effects your child might get after the vaccine include:

- a headache
- feeling very tired
- having a fever which is when the child feels very hot
- feeling like they might be sick
- being sick
- having diarrhoea which is very runny poo
- feeling generally unwell.

These side effects are likely to happen around 1 to 2 days after having the vaccine.



Getting side effects like those listed on the previous page is normal.

They show that the vaccine is working.



There is no need to worry if your tamariki show any of the common side effects.



To help them feel better faster you should make sure your child:

- gets plenty of rest
- drinks plenty of fluids such as:
 - water
 - juice.



Serious side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine



Serious reactions to the child Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine are very rare which means they do not happen to people very often.



Serious reactions usually happen within a few minutes of having the vaccine.



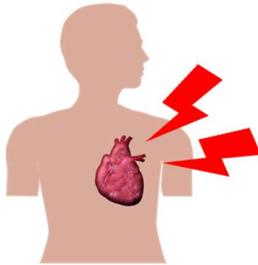
You must wait with your child at the vaccination centre for 15 minutes after they have had their COVID-19 vaccine.



This is so medical staff can make sure your child is okay after having their vaccine.



If your child has any kind of allergic reaction to the vaccine the medical staff can treat them straight away.



Some of the signs that your child might be having an allergic reaction are:

- their heart beating very fast
- they find it hard to breathe
- their face / throat being swollen
- a rash on their body
- feeling dizzy / like they might pass out.



You must tell the medical staff straight away if your child shows any of these serious side effects.



If you are not at the vaccination site when your child shows signs of a serious reaction you must phone for an ambulance straight away on **111**.



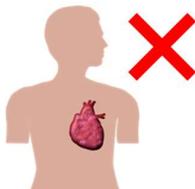
Other serious side effects of the Pfizer vaccine are illnesses that affect the heart called:



- myocarditis
- pericarditis.



It is very rare for anyone to get sick with these illnesses after the vaccine.



In the clinical trials of the child Pfizer vaccine no children showed any signs of heart problems.

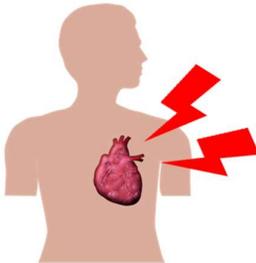


It is still important to know about the symptoms of heart problems after getting a vaccine.

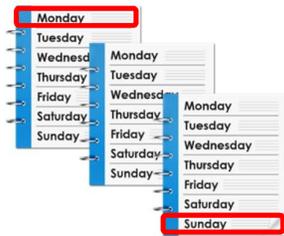


The symptoms of heart problems include:

- feeling any kind of pain in your chest
- feeling like your chest is being squeezed
- finding it hard to breathe
- having a fast heartbeat
- feeling dizzy / feeling like you might pass out.



Sometimes these symptoms can show up:



- a few days after having the vaccine
- a few weeks after having the vaccine.



You **must** get medical help straight away if your child has **any** symptoms of heart problems after getting vaccinated.



You can call **111**.

Who to talk to if you have any questions



There are people you can talk to if you have any questions / worries about your child having the COVID-19 vaccine.



You can talk to your doctor before your child goes to their vaccine appointment.



You can also talk to someone at the COVID Vaccination Healthline:

- by **phone** on:

0800 28 29 26

and

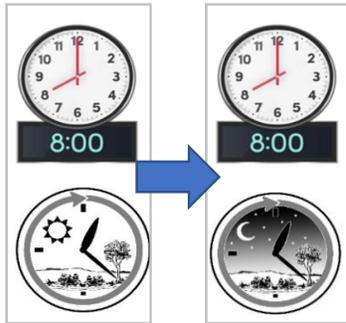
- **Press 2** to speak to someone in the disability support team.





The COVID Vaccination Healthline is open:

- every day
- from **8am** in the morning to **8pm** at night.



It does not cost you any money to contact the COVID Vaccination Healthline.



You can ask for an **interpreter** if you need one.



An **interpreter** is someone who can support you if you find it hard to communicate with other people.

You can also contact the COVID
Vaccination Healthline by:



- sending a **free text message** to

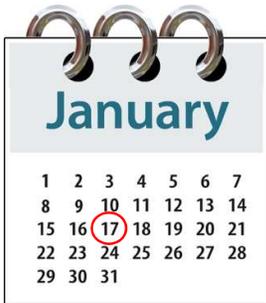
8988



- sending an **email** to:

accessiblecovidvaccinations@whakarongorau.nz

How to book an appointment to get your tamariki vaccinated



From **17 January 2022** you can get your tamariki vaccinated by:

- going with them to a walk-in vaccination site
- getting them a vaccine appointment online at



www.BookMyVaccine.nz



The COVID-19 vaccine is **free** for everyone in New Zealand.



This means it will not cost you any money for your child to get the COVID-19 vaccine.



There are lots of different places where your child can get vaccinated.



Some of the places you can book your child to get vaccinated include:

- with your doctor
- at a pop-up vaccination centre
- at a medical / hauora centre.



You should call the COVID Vaccination Healthline on **0800 28 29 26** if:

- you want to get an appointment for more than 1 child
- you cannot get online
- you have any questions about getting your child vaccinated.





If you are finding it difficult to make an appointment someone at the Healthline can make one for you.

Supporting tamariki / children who have disabilities



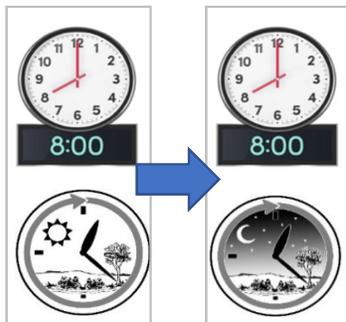
The COVID-19 Vaccination Healthline disability support team are here to:

- support your child
- support you / your whānau
- book a vaccine appointment for your child if you need them to.



You can contact the disability support team:

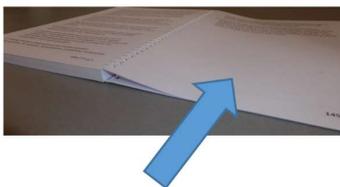
- from Monday to Friday
- from **8am** in the morning to **8pm** at night.





The disability support team can also answer any questions you may have about any needs your child has such as:

- any effects the vaccine may have on your child
- getting free transport to a vaccination centre
- any accessibility needs such as:
 - needing an interpreter
 - needing a wheelchair ramp
 - needing an appointment at a quiet time of day.

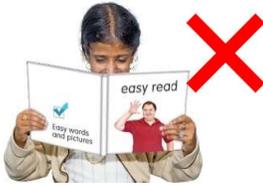


You can find the contact details for the disability support team on **pages 30 to 35** of this document.

Where to find more information



You can find out more trusted information about the child Pfizer vaccine on the following websites.



The information on these websites is **not** in Easy Read.



The Ministry of Health website:

<http://health.govt.nz/CovidVaccineKids>



The Unite against COVID-19 website:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/covid-19-vaccination-and-children/>





The Unite against COVID-19 **website** also has lots of **Easy Read** information about:



- COVID-19
- the COVID-19 vaccine.



<https://covid19.govt.nz/easy-read/>



This information has been written by the team at the Ministry of Health.



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