



“Love your neighbour as yourself”

Arohaina koe ki tōu hoa tata, ānō ko koe

Support the COVID-19 vaccination programme

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, the Pfizer vaccine is now being offered to members of the public, starting with those most at risk. The New Zealand Catholic Bishops are urging you to get vaccinated to protect yourself, your whanau and your community.

Below are the answers to some **frequently asked questions** about the vaccine.

1. Why should I get the vaccine?

COVID-19 is deadly for many people, especially those aged over 70 or those with existing health conditions (see the government’s COVID-19 website below)**. The Pfizer vaccine has been widely tested and is at least 90% efficient in protecting people from catching the virus.

Taking the vaccine also helps to protect those who are not able to have it because of other health conditions (check with your doctor if you think you fall into this group). So, do it for your whanau and your community.

2. Can I still get COVID-19 even if I get vaccinated?

Yes, it is still possible to catch the virus, though the chance of this happening is very small. But having the vaccine will mean that you become less sick.

3. I’m young and healthy, why do I need to get the vaccine?

The COVID-19 virus affects all age-groups, including young and fit adults. Young, healthy people have also died from COVID or experienced long term serious health effects.

4. Who can get a vaccine and is it free?

The vaccine is free for everyone in New Zealand and is available to those over the age of 16, regardless of visa or citizenship status. The vaccine is still being tested for use in children.

5. When I get the vaccine, will the information I give be used for anything else?

No. Any information collected about you, such as your name and medical history, will not be used for any other purpose. This information will not be shared with Immigration New Zealand.

6. Is the vaccine safe?

Over 100 million people around the world have already received the Pfizer vaccine. The risk of getting seriously ill from the virus, or dying from it, is much higher than the risk of having an adverse reaction to the vaccine. If you are worried, please speak with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

7. How does the vaccine work?

The vaccine works by teaching your body’s immune system to respond quickly to the COVID-19 virus without being exposed to the virus itself.

8. What are the likely side-effects of getting the Pfizer vaccine?

Most people who have had the vaccine have not had any side-effects. The most common side-effects are minor - a sore arm, aches, a raised temperature, headache or feeling tired.

9. Will the vaccine affect my DNA?

No, the vaccine will not affect your DNA or your genes – this is biologically impossible.

10. If I have an underlying health condition or take medication, is the vaccine still safe for me?

Please speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist as they will be able to give you specific advice based on your situation.

11. Has anyone caught COVID-19 from having the vaccine?

No. It is not possible to catch COVID-19 from the vaccine because the vaccine does not contain any live virus.

12. Are there any religious reasons to reject being vaccinated?

All COVID-19 vaccines recognised as clinically safe and effective can be used in good conscience. Getting vaccinated is an act of charity because it protects those who, for health reasons, cannot be vaccinated themselves.

*** For a list of people with underlying medical conditions and others at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, please visit: [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)*