

# Why should I have the COVID-19 vaccine?

You are at higher risk:

**1 in 5 people with chronic kidney disease (stage 4/5, transplant or dialysis) who caught COVID-19 had severe disease (serious illness or died)**



**COVID-19 vaccines save lives**



**The COVID-19 vaccines and other public health measures together will offer us the best protection against COVID-19.**

COVID-19 vaccines are free and available to everyone who chooses to have the vaccine.



You can ask your healthcare professional if the vaccine is right for you.

**Kidney Health New Zealand supports the COVID-19 vaccine for New Zealanders living with kidney disease**

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**Kidney patient organisations, kidney doctors and nurses, and transplant teams around the world support the COVID-19 vaccine for people living with kidney disease.**

**Here are the main reasons:**

**1. People with kidney disease are more likely to be infected with COVID-19 and more likely to get sick.**

People receiving dialysis or those with a transplant are most at risk.

People receiving immune-suppressing drugs are also at increased risk.

People with diabetes, heart disease or other serious health problems are also at risk.

**2. The vaccines available in New Zealand are generally suitable for people with kidney disease, including people treated with dialysis or a kidney transplant.**

Talk to your healthcare professional about whether the vaccine is right for you.

**3. COVID Vaccines Appear Safe for Kidney Transplant Recipients.**

97 people in the USA with kidney transplants were monitored after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. These people were taking immunosuppression (for example: prednisone, mycophenolate, tacrolimus).

- None of the patients had rejection.
- None of the patients receiving the vaccine developed COVID-19 during the study.
- Side effects were similar for kidney transplant patients and for the general population.
- People with kidney disease who have had the vaccine are being monitored around the world.

**4. The vaccine available in New Zealand is NOT a live vaccine.**

There is no virus injected into your body; you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

The vaccine boosts immune memory by strengthening your immune system's response to COVID-19.

**5. The vaccine is likely to protect my whānau/family from COVID-19.**

New evidence suggests that people who receive the mRNA vaccine (such as the Pfizer vaccine currently used in New Zealand) are less likely to spread infection to others.

**6. Over 350 million people have received a COVID-19 vaccine, including people with kidney disease.**

Medsafe have reviewed safety information and approved the vaccine for use in New Zealand.

The risks of becoming very sick with COVID-19 are much higher than the very **small** risk of major side effects from the vaccine.

**7. Dialysis patients were some of the first people to receive a COVID-19 vaccine in the UK**

**8. Over 99% of dialysis patients in some dialysis centres in the UK have said they want to have the vaccine**

**Is there anyone who shouldn't receive the vaccine?:**

Talk to your healthcare professional about whether the vaccine is right for you.

Some conditions need to be considered carefully, such as severe allergy to vaccine contents, or anaphylaxis.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

**Ministry of Health Manatū Hauora:** [www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines](http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines)

**New Zealand Government:** [www.covid19.govt.nz](http://www.covid19.govt.nz)

**COVID-19 advice for Māori | Te Rōpū Whakakaupapa Urutā:** <https://www.uruta.maori.nz>

**COVID-19 advice for Pacific Peoples:** <https://covid19.govt.nz/everyday-life/pacific-peoples/>

**Kidney Health New Zealand Tākihi Hauoro Aotearoa:** <https://www.kidney.health.nz>

**Kidney Health Australia:** [www.kidney.org.au](http://www.kidney.org.au)

**Transplant Australia:** [www.transplant.org.au](http://www.transplant.org.au)

**Vaccine approval by Medsafe:** <https://www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/status-of-applications.asp>

**COVID-19 vaccines from Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, Kaitohutohu Mātanga Pūtaiao Matua ki te Pirimia:** <https://www.pmcsa.ac.nz/topics/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines/>

**The 4 vaccines purchased by New Zealand are generally suitable for people with kidney disease** including those treated with dialysis or a kidney transplant.

COVID-19 vaccines for kidney patients are supported by kidney patients, kidney patient organisations, kidney doctors and transplant teams in New Zealand, Australia

<https://www.nephrology.edu.au/COVID-19/March%2021%20NZ%20Joint%20statement%20-%20Vaccination%20Position%20Statement%20for%20Patient...-1.pdf>

<https://www.nephrology.edu.au/covid-19-updates.asp>

**Dialysis patients were some of the first people to receive a COVID-19 vaccine in the UK**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-55525542>

**COVID Vaccines Appear Safe for Kidney Transplant Recipients.**

97 people with kidney transplants who were taking immunosuppression, alongside another 90 patients with other organ transplant, took part in a COVID-19 vaccine study (using "mRNA" vaccines - the same type of vaccines now available in New Zealand).

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/newsroom/news-releases/covid-19-story-tip-study-indicates-covid-19-vaccines-are-safe-for-organ-transplant-patients>

**The vaccine is likely to protect my whānau/family from COVID-19.**

New evidence suggests that people who receive the mRNA vaccine (such as the Pfizer vaccine currently used in New Zealand) are less likely to spread infection to others.

<https://www.nejm.org/covid-vaccine/faq>

## Getting your vaccination



A healthcare worker will do a health check with you and provide some information



You will need to agree to be vaccinated



Then the healthcare worker will inject the vaccine into your arm



You'll need to stay for at least 20 minutes after to check you're ok and ask you about side effects.



Once the healthcare worker says you're fine, you can leave and carry on with your day

## After receiving your vaccination



You will be asked to get your second dose of the vaccine at least 3 weeks later



You get your best protection against COVID-19 after 2 doses of the vaccine



If you have side effects or feel unwell after your vaccination, speak with your family doctor or call Healthline on 0800 358 5453

### Pregnant or breastfeeding?

Talk to your midwife or family doctor.

### Under 16?

At this stage, the vaccine is not available for under 16s.



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## COVID-19 health reminders



Stay home if you are sick



Wipe down all commonly used surfaces



Wash or sanitise your hands



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

For more information visit [Covid19.govt.nz/vaccine](https://www.covid19.govt.nz/vaccine)



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# After your immunisation

Like all medicines, the vaccine may cause side effects in some people. This is the body's normal response and shows the vaccine is working. Side effects are usually mild, don't last long and won't stop you from having the second dose or going about your daily life.

What you may feel	What can help	When this could start
Pain at the injection site, a headache and feeling tired and fatigued. These are the most commonly reported side effects.	Place a cold, wet cloth, or ice pack on the injection site for a short time.  Do not rub or massage the injection site.	Within 6 to 24 hours
Muscle aches, feeling generally unwell, chills, fever, joint pain and nausea may also occur.	Rest and drink plenty of fluids  Paracetamol or ibuprofen can be taken, follow the manufacturer's instructions.  Seek advice from your health professional if your symptoms worsen.	Within 6 to 48 hours

Serious allergic reactions can occur but are extremely rare. New Zealand vaccinators are trained to manage these. Some side effects may temporarily affect the ability to drive or use machinery. In the unlikely event this happens, please discuss it with your employer.

If you experience symptoms that could be COVID-19 related, such as new continuous cough, a high temperature/fever, or a loss of or change in your normal sense of taste or smell, stay home and get a COVID-19 test.

If you have an unexpected reaction to your COVID-19 vaccination, your vaccinator or health professional should report it to the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM).

You can also report any unexpected reactions direct by emailing CARM or using their online reporting form on the CARM website [otago.ac.nz/carm](https://otago.ac.nz/carm)

If you are unsure about your symptoms or they get worse, talk to your GP or call Healthline on **0800 358 5453**.

If you have an immediate concern about your safety, call 111 and make sure you tell them you've had a COVID-19 vaccination so that they can assess you properly.

**Unite  
against  
COVID-19**

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