

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Why should I get my tamariki immunised?

With COVID-19 spreading through our communities, it's never been more important to get our school-aged tamariki immunised against COVID-19.

Tamariki who have been immunised are far less likely to fall seriously ill. Immunisation can also help protect your whānau and community.

## What's the difference between the adult COVID immunisation and a tamariki immunisation?

Immunisation for 5 to 11-year-olds is very similar to your adult vaccination experience, with a few small differences. Tamariki will receive a paediatric version of the Pfizer vaccine, with a lower dose and smaller volume. It is also given using a smaller needle. They will need two doses to be fully protected, at least 8 weeks apart.

## When should I get my tamariki immunised?

Immunisation for school-aged tamariki is available right now. You should get your tamariki immunised as soon as possible to get the best possible protection from COVID-19.

If your tamariki has already had COVID-19, you will need to wait at least 3 months from the day they tested positive before bringing them for immunisation.

## Should I get my tamariki vaccinated if they already had COVID-19?

- Yes. It is recommended that all tamariki receive 2 doses of the child Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, even if they've already had COVID-19.
- Being vaccinated provides better protection than any immunity your child might get from being infected with the virus and can also help protect them from new variants of COVID-19.
- Individuals who have been infected with COVID-19 but are not vaccinated are more likely to get re-infected than those who have been vaccinated with 2 doses.

## What if my tamariki is nearly 12 years old?

It is up to the parent or caregiver to decide when a child gets their first vaccination. If you choose to wait until after they turn 12, they will get the adult vaccine for both doses.

If they get their first dose when they are 11, they will get the children's version for both doses – even if they get their second dose after they turn 12.



## What if my tamariki has allergies?

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is safe for people with food allergies. Unlike some other vaccines, there is no food, gelatin or latex in the Pfizer vaccine, and it is not grown in eggs.

If a child has a history of an immediate allergic reaction to other products, including food, medicines or other vaccines, they can still have this vaccine but are asked to stay a little longer (at least 30 minutes) for monitoring. Vaccinators are trained to recognise these symptoms and have the appropriate equipment to treat people on site.

## What are the side effects?

As with any immunisation, your child is likely to have a sore arm and get redness, pain or swelling at the injection site.

Other reactions that can occur, usually within one or two days, include:

- Headache
- A fever (feeling hot)
- Nausea (feeling sick), vomiting, diarrhea
- Fatigue
- General discomfort (feeling unwell, aches and pains).

These are common and show that the vaccine is working. Encouraging rest and offering plenty of fluids will help. Severe reactions to the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine are very rare and usually occur within a few minutes of the vaccination. For this reason, you and your child will be put in an observation area for monitoring by clinical staff to ensure they receive any medical treatment if this occurs.

Signs of severe allergic reaction can include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the face and throat
- A fast heartbeat

- A bad rash all over the body
- Dizziness and weakness.

If you notice your child experiencing any of these symptoms, let clinical staff know immediately. If you are not at a vaccination site, **call 111**.

Myocarditis and pericarditis are very rare but serious side effects of the Pfizer vaccine.

If your child has any of the following symptoms in the days or weeks after being vaccinated, get medical help right away.

Symptoms of myocarditis and pericarditis:

- Discomfort, heaviness, tightness or pain in their chest
- Difficulty breathing
- Feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart
- Feeling faint, light-headed or dizzy.

## Can my tamariki be immunised if they have had COVID already?

Tamariki can still get immunised against COVID-19 if they've previously had the virus.

You should wait 3 months after recovery before bringing your child for a COVID-19 vaccination.



## Can my tamariki be immunised without me?

Your tamariki can be immunised without you, but a responsible adult needs to accompany the child to their appointment(s). This can be a parent, an adult family member, trusted family friend, legal power of attorney, or whanaungatanga carer.

Consent for vaccination needs to be given by a legal guardian of the child.

If the adult who accompanies the child to the appointment is not the child's legal guardian:

- The vaccinator will need to verbally confirm by phone with a legal guardian that they consent to the child being vaccinated, or
- The responsible adult can bring a signed copy of the COVID-19 vaccination consent form completed by a guardian.

At the appointment, both the adult and child can ask as many questions as they like.

## Who can I talk to about any questions I have?

Getting your tamariki vaccinated is an important decision and it's normal to have questions about the vaccination and what it could mean for your whānau. For a kōrero with an advisor who can help answer your questions ring the COVID Vaccination Healthline 0800 28 29 26.