

Why the programme matters

For New Zealand's COVID-19 vaccination programme to be successful, we need to vaccinate as many people as possible. This protects them from being infected with COVID-19. Vaccinating nearly everybody who is able to be vaccinated helps us move towards population immunity. Vaccinating our population and achieving population immunity delivers health, social, and economic benefits for the entire country.

There are still many unknowns

Population immunity depends on the reproductive rate of the virus and its variants, the effectiveness of vaccines, and the portion of the population vaccinated. We don't yet know the effectiveness or the duration of immunity, and variants of the virus have different reproductive rates — hence the need to vaccinate as many people as possible.

While we head towards vaccinating our population, people entering New Zealand with the virus still risk passing the virus on to others.

As an aged care provider, there are ways you can help

Encourage your workers, their families and whānau, residents, and suppliers to get vaccinated. Roster time off to receive the vaccine. Consider other ways your organisation could influence or incentivise participation.

Promote positive vaccination messages and reinforce the broader COVID-19 messages including contact tracing, hand hygiene and mask wearing.

The Government's approach

Aotearoa/New Zealand has an Elimination Strategy for COVID-19.

In respect of COVID-19, the Government has two overarching priorities: to continue the health response to keep New Zealanders safe from the virus; and to drive the economic recovery from COVID-19.

The Elimination Strategy is the current approach for preventing and minimising harm associated with COVID-19.

It aims to eliminate transmission chains and to prevent the emergence of new transmission chains originating from cases that arrive from outside the country. The availability of a safe and effective vaccine with sufficient uptake may lead to the reconfiguration of other public health measures that support the Elimination Strategy.

Will people need to continue to be tested after being vaccinated?

Although the data demonstrates that the vaccines protect individuals from the effects of the virus, it is too early yet for researchers to determine whether a vaccinated person could still transmit the virus to someone else. While this remains unclear, we have to assume there is still a risk of transmission. This means that the mandatory testing of our border and MIQ workforces will continue. It also means the vaccines are not a substitute for good public health hygiene practices that include washing hands, coughing and sneezing into your elbow and wearing masks or face coverings.

The expected outcomes from the programme

A successful vaccination programme in New Zealand will contribute to these outcomes:

- Sufficient supply of safe and effective vaccines to achieve population immunity to COVID-19.
- Protection for Māori, Pacific peoples, and other population groups at particular risk from COVID-19.
- Full cultural, social, and economic recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Recognition of New Zealand as a valued contributor to global wellbeing and the COVID-19 response.
- New Zealand, Pacific, and global preparedness for response to future disease outbreaks movement between zones.

Eligibility for vaccination

COVID-19 vaccinations are publicly funded for everyone in New Zealand. This means that if you are in New Zealand, you are eligible to receive free COVID-19 vaccination regardless of your immigration or citizenship status.

Other vaccination programmes

COVID-19 vaccines cannot be administered within two weeks of an influenza vaccine, or four weeks of any other vaccine. Having a gap between two different vaccinations makes it easier to judge which vaccine may be responsible for any adverse events. This is important in the current context because COVID-19 vaccines are new.

Sequencing of COVID-19 and influenza vaccines

Your local DHB will be responsible for the implementation and delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine to your ARC facility. If you haven't already, you will shortly be receiving a questionnaire from your DHB asking for numbers of staff and residents (to ensure enough vaccines are available to each facility). While you will not be able to give the exact number, the NZACA advises that you focus on potential maximum numbers rather than minimal numbers – we want to ensure that residents and all staff are vaccinated. It is expected that roll-out will begin in mid-April.

At this stage we don't know whether the influenza vaccine or the COVID-19 vaccine will come first. This will vary from region to region and will be managed carefully through your DHB. See below for the two possible scenarios regarding sequencing of the influenza and COVID-19 vaccines.

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Day 0	Influenza	COVID-19 Dose One
Day 14	COVID-19 Dose One	COVID-19 Dose Two
Day 35	COVID-19 Dose Two	Influenza

Training and Additional Workforce

If you have registered your interest in becoming a vaccinator you will be notified about this in more detail in due course. Vaccination course training costs are fully funded by the Ministry and will be free to the vaccinator.

COVID-19 Immunisation Register (CIR)

The web-based national COVID-19 Immunisation Register (CIR) to record COVID-19 vaccinations is now operational. The CIR allows vaccinators to quickly and accurately record the event at the site of vaccination. Training and information about using the system will be available to all vaccinators as part of the COVID-19 vaccination training in due course. Training will also be given to administrators. We will keep you updated on this.

The CIR is only for COVID-19 vaccinations and all other vaccinations should continue to be recorded on the National Immunisation Register.

The rollout

The NZACA is working with the MOH on the rollout of the vaccine to all residents and staff of ARC facilities. The vaccine will not be administered until written consent has been given. Further guidance around the COVID-19 vaccination consent process is imminent.

Vaccine information from the Ministry of Health

Vaccine safety and approval

On this page:

- Making sure the vaccines are safe
- Provisional approval of vaccines
- How the vaccines were created so fast
- Side effects from the vaccines
- Effectiveness of the vaccines
- Streamlining the approval process
- If the vaccines contain new organisms

VISIT PAGE

[<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-safety-and-approval>]

COVID-19: Vaccine resources

Visit this page to download useful resources and information sheets on COVID-19 vaccine and the roll-out programme. These are available in multiple languages.

VISIT PAGE

[<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-resources>]

Vaccines

An extensive list of vaccine resources.

VISIT PAGE

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Any queries relating to the COVID-19 vaccine can be directed to

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