

Latest COVID-19 health key messages

Approved messages for use in your communications

Consistent messaging helps us to coordinate our efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This document provides approved key messages from the Ministry of Health. You may share this messaging with your internal and external audiences. New sections and changes to messages are in red.

7 July 2021

Update on QFT with Australian states

Quarantine-free travel has resumed from the ACT, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria, and will resume with Western Australia and Northern Territory from 11.59pm on Friday 9 July.

All quarantine-free travel passengers who are eligible to fly to New Zealand:

- are required to have a pre-departure test within 72 hours of when they are leaving Australia and must present evidence of a negative pre-departure test prior to boarding
- must not have been in NSW or Queensland after 10.30pm (NZT) on 26 June 2021, or at an **Australian location of interest** before then.

Whilst the travel pause remains in place for NSW and Queensland, people in these two states who ordinarily reside in New Zealand will be able to return home on managed return flights starting from 11.59pm on Friday 9 July.

Travellers eligible for managed return flights are:

- New Zealand citizens and holders of residence class visas
- holders of temporary visas and Australian citizens who last left New Zealand after 5 April 2021
- holders of current permanent residence visas (including a resident return visa) issued by the Government of Australia who last left New Zealand after 5 April 2021
- relevant family members of the people listed above.

For further advice on eligibility for travel to New Zealand visit the **Quarantine-free travel** page and the **Unite Against COVID-19** website.

Locations of interest in Australia

If you have been in Australia, continue to check the location of interest pages for the states you have been in via: **Quarantine-free travel: Contact tracing locations of interest**.

If you have been at a location of interest, isolate and call Healthline (**0800 358 5453**) to register and for further advice on testing.

Australian traveller who visited Wellington

As it is now over 14 days since the Australian traveller left New Zealand, with all identified contacts having tested negative, no further contact tracing or testing is required. No further updates on this situation are planned.

We would like to thank everyone who came forward to be tested and co-operated with contact tracers, and the many staff across the system who worked to respond effectively to this situation.

Stay home if unwell

The Ministry continues to receive feedback about advertising and promotional material that seems to suggest that members of the public should continue at work or school when unwell. We are seeking your support to distribute the messaging below out to your members in your regular sector communications.

Please use advertising or marketing material that aligns with government or Ministry of Health advice for people to stay at home if unwell and seek a COVID-19 test if they have any relevant symptoms.

Please do not use or produce any marketing or advertising material that does not support this advice.

Thank you for your assistance with this.

Time sensitive travel applications

Health workers seeking to enter New Zealand to take up a health sector role in September or October 2021 may be eligible to apply for a **time sensitive MIQ allocation** to secure their place in managed isolation.

Applications for MIQ places in September and October are now open until 14 July 2021.

To reduce processing time and streamline the process for health sector workers, the Ministry of Health has granted a blanket endorsement for applications from workers that meet both the **Critical Health Worker** definition (as set out on the Immigration NZ website for non-New Zealanders), and the criteria listed on the **time sensitive allocation** page on the Managed Isolation and Quarantine website.

Testing for COVID-19

As we head into winter, it's important that anyone with cold or flu symptoms should stay at home and get a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. You should continue to stay at home until you have received a negative test result.

Testing continues to be a core part of our elimination strategy for COVID-19 and is in addition to the current public health measures being practiced at the border such as physical distancing, basic hygiene measures, and appropriate PPE use.

The total number of COVID-19 tests processed by laboratories to date is 2,329,483. On Tuesday, 7,254 tests were processed across New Zealand. The seven-day rolling average is 5,801.

For all testing locations nationwide **visit the Healthpoint website**

Testing after vaccination

Even if you have been vaccinated, you should still get tested for COVID-19, if you develop symptoms or if you are subject to regular testing.

The vaccine is highly effective if people have both doses. That means, if you do catch COVID-19, you are far less likely to fall seriously ill or transmit the virus to others. Studies have shown that 95% of people who received both doses of the vaccine were protected against getting seriously ill.

While the data is clear that vaccines protect people from the effects of COVID-19, research is ongoing to determine whether a vaccinated person could still transmit the virus to someone else – so in the interests of safety we must assume there is still a risk of transmission

COVID-19 vaccine

Everyone in New Zealand, no matter citizenship or visa status, will be offered the vaccine for free. There will be enough vaccine for the entire population to be vaccinated and **no one will miss out**.

Provisional approval of Janssen COVID-19 vaccine

Medsafe has granted provisional approval of the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for individuals age 18 years of age and older. Cabinet will now consider options for the use of the vaccine in New Zealand.

New Zealand secured two million doses of the Janssen vaccine through an advance purchase agreement last year. It is a part of a portfolio of vaccine options that were purchased to provide the country with flexibility in delivering its vaccine strategy.

A Cabinet 'decision to use' the Janssen vaccine can be expected in August.

Janssen is a single dose, viral vector vaccine and can be stored at normal fridge temperatures (2C to 8C) for up to 3 months, and in deep freezers (-20C to -15C) for up to two years.

More COVID-19 vaccinators to be trained

The Government has approved a change to the Medicines Regulations so that more people across the country join the COVID-19 vaccination workforce.

The change means more people in the health and disability sector can now undertake the necessary training to become vaccinators, giving a boost to the COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme. It will also allow us to boost the numbers of Māori and Pacific in our vaccinator workforce.

These new COVID-19 vaccinators will first be recruited from the kaiāwhina workforce, health professionals trained overseas who are not yet registered in New Zealand, or retired health professionals whose registration has lapsed.

The new COVID-19 vaccinators will complete thorough training through the Immunisation Advisory Centre to the same standard as other vaccinators and will also be supervised and directed by registered health practitioners.

Their training will focus on tasks that can support the COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme by managing the cold chain for the vaccines, administering vaccines to low-risk people and post vaccination observation.

Training is already underway for this new group, so they are ready to join the vaccination workforce this month.

Health and safety of COVID-19 vaccine

Medsafe only grants consent for a vaccine to be used in New Zealand once it is satisfied it's safe and effective enough to use.

- It is recommended that the following gaps between vaccines be observed:
 - **At least a two-week gap** between the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and influenza vaccine
 - **A four-week gap** between the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and the Measles Mumps Rubella vaccine, when MMR is given first. The gap can be reduced to **two weeks** when giving MMR after the second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

Having a gap between the different types of vaccinations makes it easier to judge which vaccine may be responsible for any side effects. Note that there are no clinical safety concerns should the gap between vaccines be less than the recommendations above. Do not delay vaccination if such a gap is not possible.

COVID-19 vaccination for children aged 12-15

Medsafe has given provisional approval of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for 12-to-15-year-olds.

If Cabinet approve a 'decision to use' Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for 12-to-15-year-olds, the Ministry of Health will provide advice about how young people will be able to access their vaccinations as part of the rollout. Cabinet are expected to consider this issue soon. The vaccine will not be mandatory 12-to-15-year-olds.

The vaccine is how we will protect each other from the virus, and youth aged 12-to-15 years old will further help us maintain our COVID free status. The more people we vaccinate the stronger our country's population immunity becomes.

COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant women

Advice on COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy has been updated with the College of Midwives and the Royal New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Anyone who is pregnant can get a COVID-19 vaccine as part of Group 3 at any stage of their pregnancy. Data from the large number of pregnant people already vaccinated globally shows that there are no additional safety concerns with giving COVID-19 vaccines at any stage of pregnancy.

Vaccinating during pregnancy may also help protect the baby as there's evidence that infants can get antibodies to the virus through cord blood and breast milk.

COVID-19 vaccine rollout update

- Everyone in New Zealand aged 16 and over will be able to be vaccinated by the end of this year – with vaccinations starting for the general population from 28 July.
- It's important to remember that once it's your turn, you can be vaccinated at any time – there's no cut off.
- Vaccinations for the more than 1 million people in Group 3 across the country have started well. This group includes everyone in New Zealand aged 65 and over, people with underlying health conditions and people with disabilities.
- Delivery of the vaccination programme itself is the responsibility of each DHB and local health providers, who are best equipped to determine the needs of their communities.
- We expect the implementation to vary from DHB to DHB. Each DHB is taking an approach that works for their communities within the overall framework.
- Getting the right information about the COVID-19 vaccine is important. You can get accurate and trusted information at www.covid19.govt.nz and www.health.govt.nz.
- As of 6 July, more than 1.27 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine have been administered.
- Over 760 thousand people have received first dose of the vaccine.
- Just over 500,000 people have had their second dose.

COVID-19 vaccine data updates are available on a weekly basis.