

Post-vaccination wait time update

Feb 2026

National Immunisation Team

Post-vaccination wait time review



The National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) has **approved** implementation of new standardised post-vaccination observation wait times across all publicly funded vaccines in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Rationale :

- simplify guidance
- improve operational efficiency at vaccination sites
- reduce infection risk in shared spaces
- lower time-related barriers to vaccination access
- maintain safety through timely identification and management of serious adverse events such as anaphylaxis.

New post-vaccination observation guidance

15

Standard post vaccination wait time is now **15 minutes** across all vaccines in Aotearoa

5

A **reduced wait time of 5 minutes** may be considered for any individual who meets the following criteria:

This applies to **all age groups** and **all vaccines**, whether given alone or at the same time as other vaccines.

1. Do not have a history of severe allergic reactions
2. Have been assessed for any immediate post-vaccination adverse reactions (5 minutes)
3. Know when and how to seek post-vaccination advice
4. Will have an adolescent or adult with them for the first 15 minutes post-vaccination
5. Will not drive, skate, scoot, ride a bike or operate machinery until 15 minutes post-vaccination
6. Have the ability to contact emergency services if required

Wait time can be extended beyond 15 minutes if deemed appropriate by the vaccinator

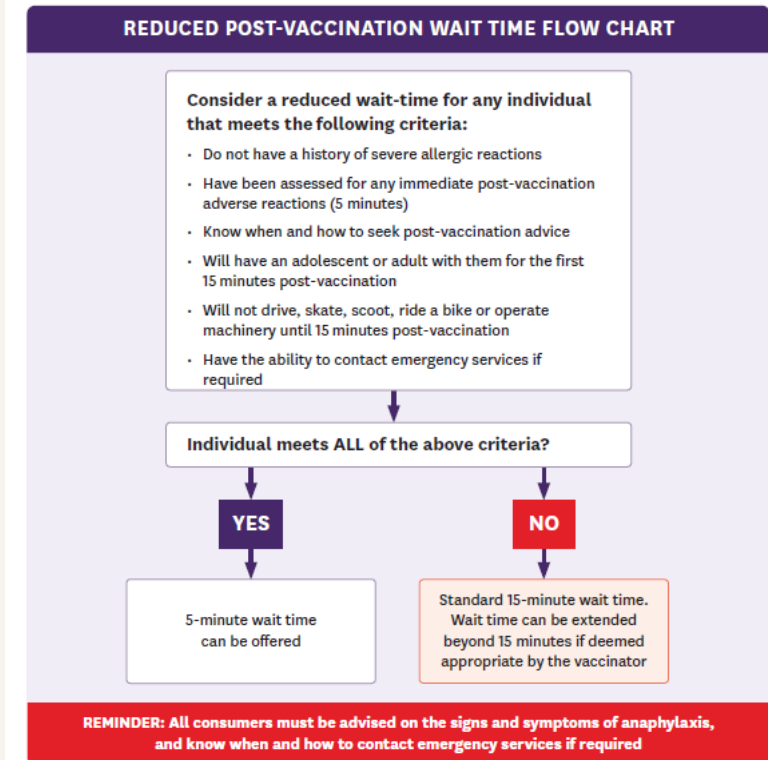
Implementation

- The new wait times can be implemented **immediately**
- The Immunisation Handbook is being updated
- New flow chart is available on IMACs website: [Guidelines for post-vaccination wait times - Factsheets - Immunisation Advisory Centre](#)



Guidelines for post-vaccination wait time

Standard post-vaccination wait time is 15 minutes across all vaccines in Aotearoa New Zealand. This applies to **all age groups** and **all vaccines**, whether given alone or at the same time as other vaccines. Wait times can be increased on an individual basis as deemed appropriate by the vaccinator OR reduced to 5 minutes, when the criteria below are met.



Recommend all vaccinators have this flow chart printed and laminated

Informed consent reminder

Before administering a vaccine the vaccinator needs to hold a full informed consent conversation with the consumer.

This should include:

- post vaccine information
- the rare and common side effects of the vaccine being administered
- signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and how and when to seek assistance if experiencing these

Consumers should be provided with post vaccine information verbally and in writing (even if its via a photo)



Don't want to take this fact sheet with you? Take a photo instead! It's important to keep this information handy.

Post vaccine leaflets



After your immunisation

Information for teenagers and adults

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

After the flu vaccination



Don't want to take this fact sheet with you? Take a photo instead! It's important to keep this information handy.

It takes up to 2 weeks after having your vaccine for your body to start protecting against flu.

As with any vaccine, you may experience some side effects. Most are mild, do not last long and happen in the first few days of having the vaccine. The flu vaccine is not a live vaccine and cannot give you the flu. Some people notice side effects after their vaccine as part of their immune system working and this can sometimes be confused with a flu infection. Serious side effects after vaccination are very rare.

What you may feel	What can help
Swelling and pain at the injection site (hard or sore to touch) Heavy arm	Place a cold, wet cloth or ice pack where the injection was given (leave it on for a short time) Do not rub the injection site
Tiredness Headache Muscle aches Chills and/or fever	Rest and drink plenty of fluids Take paracetamol or ibuprofen for pain, if needed (as recommended by your healthcare provider)

Allergic reactions and wait times after your immunisation

You will be asked to stay after the vaccination to make sure you are feeling okay, usually between 5 to 15 minutes. If you have had previous allergies or reactions to a vaccine, food, or something else, you may be asked to stay longer. Your vaccinator will let you know how long you will need to wait.

Are you up to date?

Ask your vaccinator about your immunisation status. It is usually recommended to have a booster shot with the MMR vaccine.

The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine protects against 3 viral infections – measles, mumps and rubella.

MMR vaccine has an excellent safety record

MMR vaccines have been used in New Zealand since 1990.

The vaccine is very effective. After one dose, about 95% of people are protected from measles and after two doses, more than 99% of people are protected.

A small number of people who are immunised may still become unwell if infected with measles, mumps or rubella, but they usually get a milder illness than people who haven't been immunised.

How might I feel after I get the vaccine

What you may feel	What can help	When this could start
Swelling and pain at the injection site (hard and sore to touch) Heavy arm	Place a cold, wet cloth, or ice pack where the injection was given. Leave it on for a short time. Do not rub the injection site.	Within 6 – 24 hours
Feeling unwell or tired A fever or aching muscles	Rest and drink plenty of fluids. Take paracetamol or ibuprofen for relief of significant discomfort or high fever. Follow the manufacturer's instructions, or seek advice from your health professional.	Within 6 – 24 hours
Rash and fever (very rare)	No treatment is required. The rash is not infectious however it should be reviewed by a health professional in case it is caused by an illness and not as a result of the vaccine.	Between 5 and 12 days after immunisation

Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) After your MMR vaccination



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Effects

Myocarditis and pericarditis

Inflammation of the heart muscle, and inflammation of the tissue forming a sac around the heart.

are usually caused by viral infections (19), but they are also very rare but serious side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Myocarditis or pericarditis linked to the COVID-19 vaccine appear within a few days, and mostly within a few weeks after having the vaccine. If you experience any symptoms after your vaccination, seek medical help promptly. Symptoms include: chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, discomfort or pain in your chest.

Other symptoms include: coughing or catching your breath, dizziness or light-headedness, or pounding heart, or feeling like it is hard to breathe.

Non specific symptoms to look out for include:

- abdominal pain
- leg swelling
- coughing

If you feel any of these symptoms in the days or weeks after the vaccine, you should seek medical help. If these symptoms don't go away, seek medical help again. If you experience complications, which your doctor confirms are due to your COVID-19 vaccination, they will be able to submit a claim to ACC.

Children are less likely to have these sorts of side effects but may not know how to describe them. Caregivers should ask children specifically about these side effects. Young children and infants may seem to be in pain, look pale, have faster breathing or be off their feeds.

Allergic reactions

A severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) is very rare but serious. This is the reason you will be asked to stay for at least 15 minutes after the vaccination. Vaccinators are trained to manage these reactions if they occur and have the equipment for this.

After the COVID-19 vaccination



Don't want to take this fact sheet with you? Take a photo instead! It's important to keep this information handy.

As with any vaccine or medication, having a COVID-19 vaccination may cause side effects. This fact sheet will talk about common and rare side effects of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, what you can do to help manage these if they occur and when to seek help.

What you may feel	What can help
Swelling and pain at the injection site (hard or sore to touch) Heavy arm	Place a cold wet cloth or ice pack where the injection was given (leave it on for a short time) Do not rub the injection site
Tiredness Headache Muscle aches Nausea or vomiting	Rest and drink plenty of fluids Take paracetamol or ibuprofen for pain, if needed (as recommended by your healthcare provider)