

# COVID-19 vaccine: After your child's Pfizer vaccination

Like all medicines, the Pfizer vaccine may cause side effects in some children. This is the body's normal response and shows the vaccine is working.

This brochure covers the Pfizer paediatric vaccine. It is the only COVID-19 vaccine approved for children aged 5 to 11 years old and is a lower dose than the 12+ vaccine.

Immunisation is an important way we keep tamariki safe, like being sun smart or wearing a seatbelt. It protects your tamariki from many serious diseases and stops disease spreading within your whānau and the community.

A child needs two doses of child Pfizer vaccine to be fully immunised against COVID-19. The two doses are given 8 weeks apart. The interval can be shortened to a minimum of 21 days if needed, for example if your child is starting significant immunosuppression treatment.

The Pfizer vaccine for 5 to 11 year-olds has been through clinical trials with children in this age group and, in general, the side effects that were reported were mild, didn't last long, and were similar to side effects from other routine vaccines.

## Possible side effects

Like all medicines, your child might experience some mild side effects for up to 1- 2 days after getting the Pfizer vaccination. This is common, and a sign their body is learning to fight the virus.

Most side effects do not last long and for many they will not impact on day-to-day activities. If your child doesn't experience any side effects that is OK too, the vaccine is still working.

## The most common reported reactions are:

- pain or swelling/redness at the injection site
- feeling tired or fatigued
- headache
- muscle aches and/or joint pain
- chills/fever
- nausea

## If your child feels uncomfortable you can:

- place a cold, wet cloth or ice pack on the injection site for a short time
- make sure they rest and drink plenty of fluids
- provide paracetamol in the first instance or ibuprofen if symptoms persist
- seek advice from your healthcare professional if you are unsure or if your child's symptoms worsen or call Healthline on **0800 358 5453**

## Allergic reactions

Serious allergic reactions can occur but are very rare. New Zealand vaccinators are trained to manage these. Let your vaccinator know if your child is feeling unwell or you have concerns, as the serious allergic reactions occur rapidly after vaccination. This is why your child is monitored for 15 minutes after vaccination.

## Seek medical attention

Some side effects are more serious but very rare, like a severe allergic reaction or an inflammation of the heart (Myocarditis and pericarditis).

Myocarditis and pericarditis are very rare but serious side effects of the Pfizer vaccine. In the clinical trials, no cases were seen in children aged 5 to 11 years old, however it is important to be aware of the symptoms for all ages who are vaccinated.

If your child gets any of these new symptoms, you should seek medical help, especially if these symptoms don't go away:

- tightness, heaviness, discomfort or pain in your chest or neck
- difficulty breathing or catching your breath
- feeling faint or dizzy or light-headed
- fluttering, racing or pounding heart, or feeling like it is 'skipping beats'.

## Reporting reactions

It's important you report any reactions your tamariki has following their COVID-19 vaccination so we can keep tracking the safety of the vaccine.

You can report any side effects your child experiences at [report.vaccine.covid19.govt.nz](https://report.vaccine.covid19.govt.nz) or talk to your healthcare provider if you wish to discuss reporting side effects. You don't need to be certain that the vaccine caused the reaction to submit a report.

You might also receive a text message after your tamariki's COVID-19 vaccination appointment asking you to complete a short survey about any reactions. Participation in the survey helps us learn more about the vaccine in New Zealand. The survey is optional and you can opt out at any time. You can respond to the text for free. More information about the survey can be found at [Medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-safety-reporting/](https://Medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-safety-reporting/)

If you are unsure about your child's symptoms, call Healthline on **0800 358 5453**.

If you have an immediate concern about your child's safety, call **111** and make sure you tell them your tamariki had a COVID-19 vaccination so they can assess the situation properly.

## Vaccines protect us

Vaccines help protect people of all ages against many infectious diseases, like measles and flu. Check you and your whānau are up to date with your vaccinations by talking with your healthcare provider.

There are no concerns around the timing of other non-COVID-19 vaccines such as measles, mumps, rubella; you do not need to delay any of these vaccinations.

Visit [health.govt.nz/immunisation](https://health.govt.nz/immunisation) for more information.

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## After your vaccination, it's still important to:



Stay home if you're sick



Cough or sneeze into your elbow



If you have COVID-19 symptoms, get a test



Wash or sanitise your hands