

7 September 2021

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H202110260

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 10 August 2021 for information related to the COVID-19 vaccine. Please find a response to each part of your request below:

“Can you please advise me of the approved legal status of any vaccine and if it is experimental?”

Information on the status of applications for regulatory approval of COVID-19 vaccines is publicly available at www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/status-of-applications.asp. Consent under section 20 or 23 of the Medicines Act 1981 means that a medicine can be sold or supplied in New Zealand, subject to any conditions placed on the consent. This means that it can be administered outside of clinical trial and is not experimental.

“Can you please provide details and assurances that the vaccine has been fully, independently and rigorously tested against control groups and the subsequent outcomes of those tests?”

Please refer *The New England Journal of Medicine* article outlining the results from the phase three clinical trial for Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine:
www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmoa2034577

“Can you please advise of the full list of contents of the vaccine I am to receive and if any are toxic to the body?”

The New Zealand data sheet for Comirnaty contains a list of all ingredients and details of all known adverse events. Medsafe considers all ingredients in the quantities present in the vaccine to meet suitable standards of toxicological safety. The data sheet is publicly available at: www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/Datasheet/c/comirnatyinj.pdf.

“Can you please fully advise of all the adverse reactions associated with this vaccine since its introduction?”

Known adverse reactions are included in the data sheet above. An overview of reports of adverse events following immunisation is published at <https://www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/vaccine-report-overview.asp>. Please note, events are not the same as reactions as they may be coincidental.

"Can you please advise me of the likely risk of fatality, should I be unfortunate to contract Covid 19 and the likelihood of recovery?"

The risk of fatality after contracting COVID-19 is dependent on many factors. These factors may include a person's age and underlying conditions. The number of cases of COVID-19 reported worldwide on the 6 September 2021 was 221,558,109 with 4,581,963 recorded deaths. These figures result in a mortality rate of just over 2%. Compared to a person aged 20-39, a person who is 85 years or older has a risk which is 600 times higher than this. Vaccination markedly reduces the risk of becoming ill or dying from COVID-19.

"Can you please confirm that the vaccine you are advocating is NOT 'experimental mRNA gene altering therapy'?"

"Can you please confirm that I will not be under any duress from yourselves or my employers, in compliance with the Nuremberg Code?"

"Once I have received the above information in full and I am satisfied that there is NO threat to my health, I will be happy to accept your offer to receive the treatment, but with certain conditions - namely that: You confirm that I will suffer no harm."

"Following acceptance of this, the offer must be signed by a fully qualified doctor who will take full legal and financial responsibility for any injuries occurring to myself, and/or from any interactions by authorized personnel regarding these procedures."

"In the event that I should have to decline the offer of vaccination, please confirm that it will not compromise my position and that I will not suffer prejudice and discrimination as a result? I would also advise that my inalienable rights are reserved."

"Please explain why there hasn't been lockdowns for all respiratory viruses in the past, as they cannot be eliminated"

In response to these parts of your request it is important to note that the Act allows people to ask for information. It does not require the Ministry to create new information, compile information it does not hold, or in the case of these parts of your request, to provide or prove an opinion. The Act does not support requests where a comment or a hypothetical statement is put to it and Ministry is asked to comment on it, couched as a request for official information. These parts of your request are therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act on the grounds that the information requested does not exist.

Please confirm to me what tests are done to distinguish Covid variants. What tests tell you that it is the delta variant."

The variants of COVID-19 (including the delta variant) are determined by Whole Genome Sequencing. Detailed information on genome sequencing can be found on the Institute of Environmental Science and Research website at: www.esr.cri.nz/our-expertise/covid-19-response/new-news-page/.

"Please confirm that there is no cure for respiratory viruses. Respiratory viruses circulate every year."

There is currently no 'cure' for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Further information is available at: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/treatments-for-

[severe-illness.html](#) and www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters.

There are several guidelines outlining the evidence on medicines used to treat COVID-19 patients. These include:

- the Australian Living Guideline: <https://app.magicapp.org/#/guideline/L4Q5An/section/jD7N3E>,
- World Health Organization: , <https://app.magicapp.org/#/guideline/nBkO1E>,
- UK National Institute for Health Care Excellence: <https://app.magicapp.org/#/guideline/L4Qb5n/section/LAJvRn>,
- Infectious Diseases Society of America: www.idsociety.org/practice-guideline/covid-19-guideline-treatment-and-management/ and
- the United States National Institutes of Health: www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/management/clinical-management/hospitalized-adults--therapeutic-management/.

These guidelines are continually reviewed and regularly updated. Additionally, peak regulatory bodies, including the United States' Food and Drug Administration, Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration, United Kingdom's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, and European Medicines Agency issue approvals, recommendations, and advice for COVID-19 medicines after exhaustive review of the evidence. As of September 2021, none of these sources have found a medicine that can be used to cure COVID-19.

"Please confirm that respiratory virus particles are actually small enough to go through a mask."

The SARS-CoV-2 virus is very small, but the virus travels in a person's breath in droplets of different sizes. Very small droplets contain less virus than larger droplets. Masks are made of different materials. Some materials will capture even very small particles and filter out all virus containing particles. Such masks with very high performance are measured against the proportion of small droplets they filter out. Roles where there may be a higher risk of infection, such as at the border, require individuals to wear waterproof "N95" masks with the 95 representing their ability to filter 95% of small droplets. While home-made cloth masks or manufactured surgical masks do not perform this well, they still reduce the ability to breath in larger droplets and a large proportion of smaller droplets, significantly reducing the risk of infection. Further information on this topic can be found at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7027e1.htm

"Please confirm that you have tested virus covid 19 and have actually isolated this in a test"

The information in this part of your request has been previously published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/information-release/h202100116_2_feb_2021_covid_virus_isolation.pdf. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information requested is already online and accessible.

I trust this information satisfies your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gill Hall".

Gill Hall
Group Manager
COVID-19 Science and Insights