

25 February 2022

s 9(2)(a)

By email: **s 9(2)(a)**
Ref: H202200149

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) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 11 September 2021 for information related COVID-19 vaccination. I will respond to each part of your request in turn:

What testing program do you have for vaccinated persons; studies positively show that vaccinated persons also shed the virus?

COVID-19 testing programs such as nasopharyngeal testing (or PCR test), saliva testing and rapid antigen testing are equally available to both vaccinated and unvaccinated people in New Zealand.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (the Pfizer vaccine) is an mRNA vaccine. These types of vaccines contain instructions that teach our cells how to make the spike protein. Although some vaccines for other diseases contain live viruses that have been weakened, the COVID-19 vaccines approved in New Zealand do not use a live virus. As the vaccines do not contain this live virus, vaccinated people do not pose the threat of viral shedding.

Would you publicly state that a vaccinated person could possibly be a risk to both another vaccinated, or an unvaccinated person equally?

In response to this part of your request it is important to note that the Act allows people to ask for official information. It does not require the Ministry to create new information, compile information it does not hold, or in the case of this part of your request, to provide or confirm an opinion. For information related to the transmissibility of COVID-19 between vaccinated people, please refer to the following links:

- Science and technical advice on COVID-19 can be found on the Ministry's website at: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-and-tools/covid-19-science-news
- Information related to vaccine effectiveness and protection can be found on the Ministry's website at: www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-effectiveness-and-protection
- COVID-19 FAQs at: www.covid19.govt.nz/covid-19-vaccines/get-the-facts-about-covid-19-vaccination/covid-19-vaccination-your-questions-answered/

While vaccination does not eliminate the risk of transmission of COVID-19, a number of studies show that the COVID-19 vaccine does reduce transmission, especially between people who are vaccinated. Our public health response to COVID-19 encourages people to continue taking precautions once vaccinated, such as wearing a mask and getting tested for the virus.

What numbers of vaccinated persons have needed hospital care?

The Ministry has interpreted this part of your request as asking for the number of people who were vaccinated, became infected with COVID-19, and needed hospital-level care as a result of infection. This information is publicly available on the Ministry's website at:

www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-data-and-statistics/covid-19-case-demographics

What numbers of vaccinated have tested positive for COVID?

Information on the vaccination status of COVID-19 cases is publicly available on the Ministry's website at: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-data-and-statistics/covid-19-case-demographics

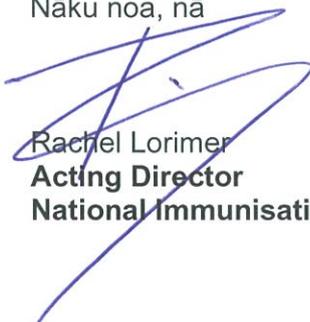
Have any transmissions from a vaccinated to another vaccinated person been recorded in New Zealand?

The source of transmission is unable to be determined using National Contact Tracing Solution (NCTS) data held by the Ministry. The most probable transmission route is identified through case investigation and further testing, such as genomic testing. This information may be captured in notes but is not a reportable field in NCTS. The Institute of Environmental Scientific Research conducts genomic testing, however there is no requirement in their database (EpiSurv) to record this information.

I trust this information fulfils your request under the Act. 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.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry of Health website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases

Nāku noa, nā



Rachel Lorimer
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