

8 November 2023

§ 9(2)(a)

By email: § 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2023032746

Tēnā koe § 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 3 November 2023 for information regarding the Health Canada announcement about the presence of DNA contamination in the Pfizer COVID-19 Comirnaty vaccines. You requested:

“Can you please confirm or deny these allegations by Health Canada as this affects every vaccinated person here in New Zealand. Was MedSafe advised of this contamination of transvective DNA and SV40 enhancer?”

Medsafe is aware of claims that mRNA vaccines contain ‘excessive levels of DNA’ encapsulated in lipid nanoparticles, and the claim that this presents a safety risk. These seem to arise following a pre-print publication by Kevin McKernan et al. Preprint publications have not yet undergone a thorough review and critical analysis by scientific peers.

This claim has been rejected by the scientific community at large. In response to the publication preprint and associated claims, experts have noted that to date, claims that COVID-19 mRNA vaccines can alter DNA in people lack a biologically plausible mechanism to explain how this would happen. Further, they note that neither the preprint by McKernan et al. nor the other studies cited in the article provided evidence for the claim that COVID-19 mRNA vaccines contain significant DNA contamination or that the vaccines can alter DNA in people.

Regarding Comirnaty, release testing according to registered specifications is conducted on every batch of Comirnaty prior to release. The amount of residual DNA is controlled with an appropriately chosen and qualified specification limit for DNA tested via qPCR; only batches that meet this specification are released.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

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 Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā



Chris James
Group Manager
Medsafe