

Your COVID-19 vaccination

Everything you need to know about Novavax

The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine (Nuvaxovid) is for adults aged 12 and above who wish to have a different COVID-19 vaccine option. Novavax is the first protein-based COVID-19 vaccine to be approved for use in New Zealand and helps prevent you from getting infected and having COVID-19 symptoms, or severe illness.

A free Novavax booster is available to those over 18, at least six months after completing their primary course of any COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Novavax). The Novavax booster will be available without a prescription at select vaccination centres around the country.

New Zealand now has two vaccines available (Pfizer and Novavax). The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine continues to be the preferred COVID-19 vaccine. Novavax provides New Zealanders with another COVID-19 vaccination option.

All of these vaccines are free.

Getting your vaccination



A healthcare worker will do a health check with you and answer your questions.



You will need to agree to be vaccinated. Remember, you can ask questions at any time.



A fully-trained healthcare worker will then give you the vaccine in your upper arm.



You will need to stay for at least 15 minutes so a healthcare worker can look out for you and make sure you are ok.



Once the healthcare worker is confident that you're fine and you are feeling ok, you can leave and carry on with your day.

After your vaccination



You can get your second dose of Novavax three weeks later. This is important because you will get your best protection against COVID-19 after two doses.



If you feel unwell or are worried about any side effects, speak with your trusted health professional.

Is the vaccine safe?

The Novavax vaccine has been thoroughly assessed for safety by our own Medsafe experts.

Medsafe only grants consent for using a vaccine in Aotearoa once they're satisfied the international evidence shows the benefits outweigh the risks.

Can I get it if I'm pregnant?

There is insufficient data on the use of Novavax in pregnant people, so the Pfizer vaccine remains the preferred choice of vaccine for this group. If you're pregnant, you can get a Pfizer vaccine at any stage of your pregnancy.

Potential side effects

As with any vaccine, you may have some temporary side effects after receiving Novavax.

Common side effects after Novavax include:

- injection site pain or tenderness
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle or joint pain
- generally feeling unwell
- nausea or vomiting.

Some people also experience a rise in their blood pressure after the vaccine. Most side effects are mild and go away within a few days.

Rare side effects of Novavax

The main reported rare but serious side effect after Novavax is severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis). These reactions usually occur soon after you've had your vaccine, which is why you need to wait at least 15 minutes. If you do have a serious allergic reaction, vaccinators are trained to manage these.

It's recommended that you do not have Novavax if you have had a severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of the vaccine or to any component of the vaccine.

Myocarditis and pericarditis are also very rare but serious side effects

Symptoms of myocarditis or pericarditis linked to the vaccine generally appear within a few days, and mostly within the first few weeks after having the vaccine. If you get any of these new symptoms after your vaccination, you should seek prompt medical help. If these symptoms don't go away, seek medical help again. Children are less likely to have these sorts of side effects but may not volunteer symptoms. Caregivers should ask children how they are feeling.

Symptoms may include:

- 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'.

If you feel any of these symptoms in the days or weeks after the vaccine, you should see a healthcare professional such as a GP, afterhours service or hospital – there will be no charge for the consultation. You can also call **Healthline** on **0800 358 5453** anytime to get advice.

If you have an immediate concern about your health, call **111**, and make sure you tell them you've had a COVID-19 vaccination with Novavax so they can assess you properly.

You can report any side effects you experience at:

report.vaccine.covid19.govt.nz

People who are not recommended to have Novavax

It's recommended that you do not have Novavax if you have had a severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of the vaccine or to any component of the vaccine.



To book an appointment:

visit bookmyvaccine.nz or phone **0800 28 29 26** to book over the phone. Not all sites are equipped to deliver the Novavax vaccine.

Getting the right information matters

Be aware of incorrect information on social media and other places.

You can get accurate and trusted information at:

- Call the COVID Vaccination Healthline on **0800 28 29 26** (8am-8pm, 7 days a week). [Covid19.govt.nz](https://covid19.govt.nz)
- [Health.govt.nz/covid-vaccine](https://health.govt.nz/covid-vaccine)
- [Karawhiua.nz](https://karawhiua.nz)
- or talk with your doctor.