

## Advice for families

# Supporting loved ones to receive the COVID-19 vaccine

It's tough for many whānau in Aotearoa right now and we know that conversations around being vaccinated against COVID-19 can create additional stress within families.



For whānau with loved ones who have experience of mental distress and/or substance use, the idea of having these conversations can be even more worrying.

Some whānau have lost connection with their loved ones or find it stressful to reach out to them.

By reaching out or starting a conversation, you may be able to help your whānau to be protected against COVID-19.

There is also a lot of information about the vaccination, including misinformation, and many people with mental distress or who use substances find it hard to trust the health system, or the Government.

It can be difficult to know what to do or say when someone expresses fear or concern about the vaccine.

We know that some people need a lot of support right now and vaccination may not seem to be the most urgent thing that people need help with.

But we also know that people who experience mental distress and/or substance use are more likely to become very unwell if they are infected with COVID-19.

## How you can help

### Listen

Listen with empathy and respect.

Understanding how vaccines work is complicated and there is a lot of confusing information in the media and on social media.

### Agree

Agree that it can be hard to find reliable information that's easy to understand.

Ask them if they have places they go and people they trust to give them health information.

Ask if there is anything you can do to help them get the answers they need.

### Offer to help

Offer to help them write down their questions, or arrange a time to talk to someone they trust.

It could be a community support worker, a cultural kaimahi, a health worker or someone they trust who has been vaccinated.

### Share

Share reliable and trustworthy information.

Share the Unite Against COVID and Ministry of Health websites with them as places with reliable information about the development of the vaccine, its safety and effectiveness. Offer to help them look for information (if appropriate).

### Thank them

Thank them for sharing their concerns with you.

Talk a little about what you are looking forward to once everyone is vaccinated, for example knowing your parent/grandparent is protected, being able to go out safely, etc.

### Help them book

If they're ready to be vaccinated, offer to help them book their appointment online at [bookmyvaccine.nz](https://bookmyvaccine.nz) or take them to a vaccination centre.

Support them through the vaccination process.

### Words matter

Using the word "but" can instantly evoke a negative response, instead try "and also ..." or "at the same time, it could be that ..."

### Actions matter

Rolling your eyes, raising your voice or interrupting will all feel like judgements to the person and quickly bring the conversation to an end.

### You can't make the decision for them, only they can

Be kind, be respectful, offer to help, create opportunities for them to have their concerns heard and to weigh up the decision themselves.

It may be just the nudge they needed.



When you get vaccinated you're not just protecting yourself, you're also helping to reduce the risk of passing on COVID-19 to your whānau, friends and community.

The COVID-19 vaccine is free and available to everyone aged 12 years and over in Aotearoa.

### How the vaccine works

The COVID-19 vaccine works by teaching your body to fight the virus. It protects you from becoming very sick from the virus. The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19.

You will need two doses of the vaccine, three weeks or more apart, for the vaccination to be most effective. To ensure you have the best protection you need to get both doses.

### Is the vaccine safe?

The Pfizer vaccine has been thoroughly assessed for safety internationally and by our own Medsafe experts in New Zealand.

Medsafe only grants consent for using a vaccine in Aotearoa once they are satisfied it has met strict standards for safety, efficacy and quality.

This is the same process used to assess other medicines, like the flu vaccine. There have been no shortcuts taken in granting approval.

The Pfizer vaccine has been used successfully by millions of people around the world and its use continues to be monitored.



For more guidance about having these conversations with your loved ones, visit:

[covid19.govt.nz/vaccine-conversations](https://covid19.govt.nz/vaccine-conversations)



For reliable and trustworthy information to share with your loved ones, visit:

[covid19.govt.nz/vaccines](https://covid19.govt.nz/vaccines) and [health.govt.nz/covid-19-vaccines](https://health.govt.nz/covid-19-vaccines)



To help them book an appointment, visit:

[bookmyvaccine.nz](https://bookmyvaccine.nz) or phone the COVID Vaccination Healthline on **0800 28 29 26**