

Information about your COVID-19 vaccine

FACT SHEET FOR **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**



This is an information sheet about your COVID-19 vaccine.



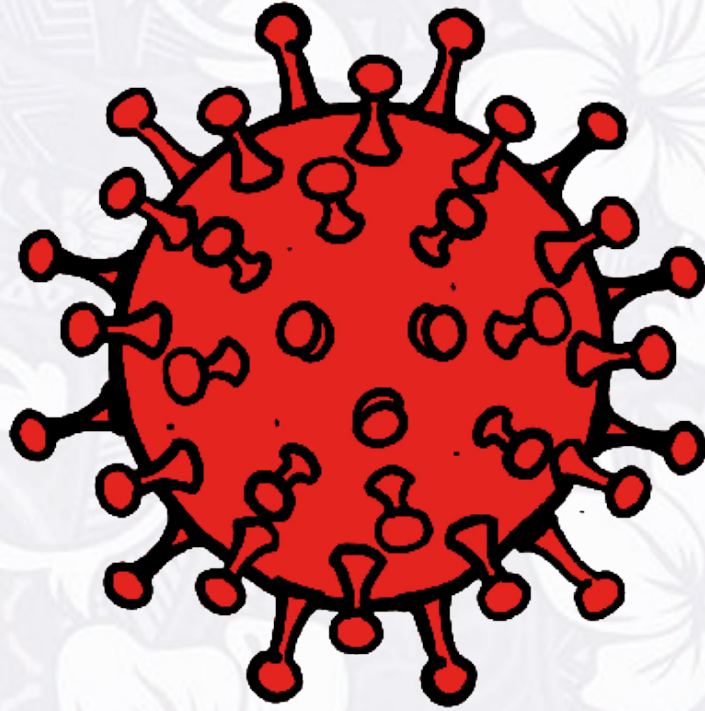
This information is easy to read.



If you have a disability and have issues understanding or reading anything in this information sheet, ask your carer, family or friends to help you.



If you are a family member, friend or carer of a person with a disability, share this important information with the individual who is in your care.



SECTION A:

Information About COVID-19

COVID-19 is a disease caused by an virus that spreads easily from person to person. Currently the world is struggling with a global pandemic because of this virus.

How serious is COVID-19?

Most people experience mild, flu-like symptoms, but for some people it can cause them to become seriously ill and even die.

People who are most at risk of becoming seriously ill are elderly people (over 60 years) and people with other medical conditions, like heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.

Having a disability does not necessarily mean you are at higher risk of COVID-19. However, if you are in close contact with a carer or unable to practice all the COVID-19 safe measures (wearing a mask, keeping physical distance from others) you may be at higher risk of being exposed to the virus.



How does the virus spread from person to person?

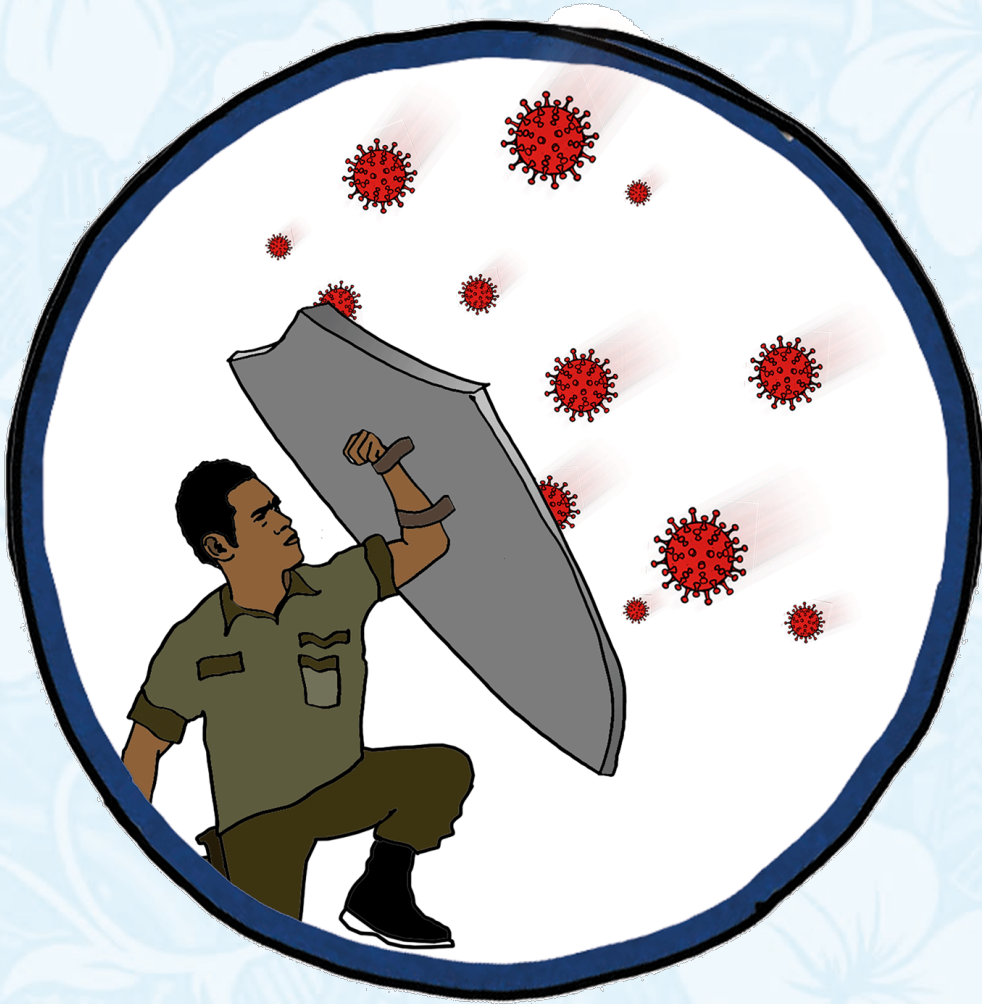
People who get COVID-19 often experience symptoms similar to when you have the flu or a cold. Common symptoms include sore throat, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, tiredness and fever.

Because the virus affects a person's respiratory system (lungs), the virus mainly spreads from person to person through respiratory droplets. These are **small particles that are released when the sick person coughs or sneezes.**



A person may also become infected with the virus if they **breathe in these droplets** or if **they touch surfaces and objects where the virus has landed and then touch their faces**. This is because the virus can enter a person's body through their eyes, nose and mouth.





SECTION B:

Getting your COVID-19 vaccine

Vaccination is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases.

How does the COVID-19 vaccine work?

A vaccine acts like a soldier which helps to protect your body from the virus.

Vaccines teach your body to recognize germs such as viruses and bacteria, and how to fight them off.

This means that if you are vaccinated and come in contact with a person who is infected with the virus, your body's defences (called antibodies) know how to will quickly fight the virus before you become sick or prevent you from becoming seriously ill.



Why is it important that you receive your COVID-19 vaccine?

People with disabilities often are at greater risk for health problems. This is why it is especially important that people with disabilities get the COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 vaccines provide you the safest and best protection against the virus.

There are different types of COVID-19 vaccines, however they all work to protect you against COVID-19.

Even if there are no cases right now of COVID-19 in your community, at any time this situation could change.

Who should receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Everyone aged 18 years and above should receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Some COVID-19 vaccines can be safely given to people under 18 years.



Is it safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I have another medical condition?

COVID-19 vaccines are safe for people with other medical conditions including hypertension, diabetes, asthma, lung, liver and kidney disease. Having a disability does not prevent you from being vaccinated, however if you have concerns, talk to your health worker.

After I receive my COVID-19 vaccine, do I still need to practice COVID-19 safety measures?

Vaccines provide you the best protection against becoming seriously ill or dying from COVID-19. However, we don't know how long these vaccines will protect us and some people may still get infected even if they are vaccinated.

This is why it is important that we all continue to practice the other COVID-19 safety measures after vaccination, like covering our cough and sneeze, washing our hands or using hand sanitizer regularly, wearing a mask if recommended, and staying at home if feeling unwell.

What you can expect during your vaccination session



Before your vaccination session

You may need to register for your COVID-19 vaccine. Ask your family or friends to help you with registering. If you have any questions or concerns about the vaccine, talk to your doctor or local health worker.

During your vaccination session

To get your COVID-19 vaccine, you will either need to go to a vaccination site or if offered, contact your health provider to have the vaccination team visit your home.



If you have a legal guardian, they must be with you during your vaccination session to sign the consent form.

If going to the vaccination center, bring a snack and water with you, especially if you need to take medicines on time.



At the start of your vaccination session, the nurse will ask you some questions to see if there is any reason why you shouldn't receive the vaccine. Answer these questions honestly, as this is very important. This includes whether you have any allergies.



If you have any questions or concerns about the vaccine, ask the nurse for more information. They are there to help answer any of your questions or concerns.

Once the nurse has checked that you can safely receive the vaccine, you or your legal guardian will need to sign the consent form. Provide consent only if you understand the information provided.



After you have signed the consent form, the nurse will prepare your vaccine.

The needle will be injected into the upper part of your arm. You will feel a pin prick. It is not painful and will only take seconds.

You will be given a small card. This is a record of your vaccination. It is important you keep this card and store it safely.

After you receive your vaccine

You must wait 15 – 30 minutes at the vaccination site. This is so you can be monitored by the health team for any rare, but severe side effects.



If you experience any pain or discomfort, it's important you immediately tell the health team or your carer so you can be checked and receive treatment, if required.



What side-effects you may have after getting your vaccine

After getting your vaccine you will likely have some side-effects. These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection.

They are usually mild and should go away in a few days.

Common side-effects are:

- mild fever
- a sore arm where the needle went in
- feeling tired
- a headache
- body aches
- feeling or being sick



Serious side effects are very rare, however should be treated immediately.

If your fever lasts more than 48 hours or if you are still concerned about your symptoms, it is important you contact your health worker or hospital.

If you need help contacting or visiting your nearest health facility, ask your family, friends or carer to assist you.



What you can do to help the pain

To help with the pain of **mild side effects**, you can:

- apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth on your arm where you go the vaccine
- use your arm normally
- take paracetamol.



Receiving your second dose of COVID-19 vaccine

For most COVID-19 vaccines you need 2 doses of the vaccine to give you the greatest protection.

During your first vaccination session, the health worker will tell you when to come back for your second dose.

You will receive the same type of vaccine both times.