

2 February 2022

Helen Wallis

By email: [fyi-request-17562-d34e70e6@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-17562-d34e70e6@requests.fyi.org.nz)  
Ref: H202117856

Tēnā koe Helen

### 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 1 December 2021 for information relating to applications regarding vaccine status. Each point of your request is answered in turn.

1. *I request any and all information pertaining to the studies undertaken to show the risk that a person with a double jab of Pfizer "immunisation" against Covid-19 has in regards to contracting Covid-19 from a non-vaccinated person.*

Preliminary results from studies carried out by researchers have shown that two doses of the Pfizer vaccine can substantially reduce transmission of the virus:

[www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/science\\_updates\\_7\\_may\\_2021.pdf](http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/science_updates_7_may_2021.pdf). A summary of currently available data can be found at: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/fully-vaccinated-people.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/fully-vaccinated-people.html).

The Immunisation Handbook (chapter 5) provides references to scientific studies conducted regarding COVID-19 and the vaccine: [www.health.govt.nz/our-work/immunisation-handbook-2020/5-coronavirus-disease-covid-19](http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/immunisation-handbook-2020/5-coronavirus-disease-covid-19)

Medsafe also publishes up to date information regarding the Comirnaty vaccine, including its clinical efficacy and safety: [www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/PUArticles/June2021/Spotlight-on-Comirnaty-vaccine.html](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/PUArticles/June2021/Spotlight-on-Comirnaty-vaccine.html)

The following links may also be useful to you:

- Information regarding the efficacy and safety of the vaccine can be found here: [www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/about-covid-19/covid-19-about-delta-variant](http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/about-covid-19/covid-19-about-delta-variant)
- The Ministry of Health also regularly updates the Science News page for up to date information regarding COVID-19 and the Vaccine: [www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-and-tools/covid-19-science-news](http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-and-tools/covid-19-science-news).

2. *I request any and all information pertaining to the studies undertaken to show the risk that a person with a double jab Pfizer "immunisation" against Covid-19 has in regards to contracting Covid-19 from a child under 12 years of age.*
3. *I request any and all information showing the expected risk of a child catching Covid-19 in a school environment and the expected outcome of their exposure to Covid-19. Please provide all supporting evidence that you have used to substantiate the above statements including the study in the UK, the study(ies) which shows that vaccinated vulnerable populations will have a high chance of falling sick and potentially dying, the*

*study(ies) which show that mandating vaccines have an effect on the rate of transmission to vaccinated vulnerable people, the study(ies) which support the principle that mandating vaccines causes a reduction of infection and transmission in the wider community. Please also provide a list of studies that were reviewed which show the opposite i.e. vaccination does not effect the infection rate and transmission in the wider community. I wish to see that information from both sides of the question has been reviewed.*

As you have been advised, the Ministry does not provide situational advice.

Medsafe assesses medicine and vaccine applications against internationally established criteria. The stringent requirements vaccines must meet in order to be approved remain in place under emergency circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Medsafe has found that the benefits of vaccination with the Pfizer vaccine continue to greatly outweigh the risk of both COVID-19 infection and vaccine side effects. More information about the vaccine evaluation and approval process can be found here: [www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/vaccine-approval-process.asp](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/vaccine-approval-process.asp)

While the Act allows New Zealanders to ask for information from Ministers and government agencies, there is no requirement for agencies to create new information, compile information they do not hold or provide or prove an opinion. Your questions and the statements that support them appear designed to engage in a debate about the Government's COVID-19 vaccination programme, rather than a request for official information. The Act does not support requests where an opinion, comment, argument, or hypothetical statement is put to the Ministry for response, couched as a request for information. These questions are therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act on the grounds that the information sought is not held by the Ministry.

Studies and research regarding the vaccine can be found on PubMed here: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/> and the New England Journal of Medicine here: <https://www.nejm.org/coronavirus>.

- 4. Please provide a full disclosure explanation to answer the following parts of the above question:*

*What is the plan for vaccine boosters in NZ into the foreseeable future, eg will there be a requirement for one every 6 months etc*

*What is the expected efficacy (i.e) 6 months after the booster shot*

Current evidence suggests that after two doses protection against severe disease, including hospital and ICU admission, remains high, including for the Delta and Omicron variant. However, it is important to note that antibody levels decline over time. Information about the vaccine effectiveness and protection is available at: [www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-effectiveness-and-protection](http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-effectiveness-and-protection)

Workforces covered by the Vaccination Order including border, MIQ and health and disability workers are now required to have their booster by 15 February 2022, or not later than six months after their second dose for those who were only recently vaccinated.

All other workforces covered by the Vaccination Order including Education, Corrections, Police, Defence, and Fire and Emergency workforces are required to have their booster vaccination by 1 March 2022 or no later than six months after their second dose for those who were only recently vaccinated.

We continue to assess new evidence on booster doses, including the interval between the second dose and booster dose, as well as the requirement for boosters in the general population.

More information about vaccine boosters is available at: [www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-boosters](http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-boosters).

- 5. Please let me rephrase the above question. Please provide any and all information regarding early treatment drugs for covid 19 and any information held about them as a control mechanism against covid 19.*

The Ministry's guidelines for COVID-19 treatments can be found at: [www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-health-professionals/covid-19-primary-care](http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-health-professionals/covid-19-primary-care). Information regarding the treatment itself, will be held the District Health Board (DHBs), as they are conducting the treatment.

- 6. I request any and all information pertaining to the stance the government has taken on not allowing a blood serology test showing antibodies to Covid-19 through exposure to the virus to be counted as being effectively immunised. It is clear that many other countries worldwide have both options, either recovered with antibodies or vaccinated. Information regarding antibodies is still under active consideration, therefore this part of your request is withheld under section 9(2)(if)(iv) of the Act. Available information regarding immunity and antibodies can be found here: [13][www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/about-covid-19/covid-19-what-we-know-about-infection-and-immunity#immunity](http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/about-covid-19/covid-19-what-we-know-about-infection-and-immunity#immunity). I am unsatisfied with your response to this question. The information in the link provided is clearly out of date and it seems the latest information is not being considered. Please provide a full disclosure explanation as to how the antibody response can still be under active consideration when there have been multiple studies world wide which show an appropriate antibody response to provide immunity. The WHO also acknowledges natural immunity gained from recovery from covid 19. Also please provide all meeting minutes and communications regarding the active consideration mentioned in your answer.*

With regards to those who have already had COVID-19, antibody (often referred to as serology) tests look for antibodies in the blood. COVID-19 antibody tests can help identify people who may have been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus or have recovered from a COVID-19 infection.

At this time, researchers do not know whether the presence of antibodies means that you are immune to COVID-19; or if you are immune, how long it will last.

In people who have received a COVID-19 vaccination, antibody testing is not recommended to determine whether you are immune or protected from COVID-19. Vaccination remains the safest way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 infection. If you are unsure, please discuss with your healthcare professional the risk-benefit assessment for receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

The Ministry continues to assess this question and is in discussion with the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) to determine if a change is appropriate that should consider natural infection alongside any decision around immunity from vaccination

While other countries and the WHO have made statements about immunity from natural infection, the Ministry of Health has not revised its position on this topic and continues to keep it under open review. At this point, for New Zealand, very few people have had COVID-19 such that an adjustment in this position would not be appropriate to apply to New Zealand.

7. *I request any and all information pertaining to the governments acceptable death rate from Covid-19*

*Please provide me with a full disclosure explanation unless the governments' position is to attempt to prevent any death at any cost related to the virus or follow on effects of the response to covid 19 as discussed above.*

As you have been previously advised, the Government does not have an 'acceptable death rate' so the information you have requested does not exist and is refused under section 18(e) of the Act. The Ministry considers that every death due to COVID-19 is regrettable and a tragedy for the community and their whānau. This is why the Government has been urging New Zealanders to get fully vaccinated to protect themselves and their communities from the harm caused by the virus. Please be advised that repeatedly attempting to engage in a debate with the Ministry could be construed as vexatious and result in such requests being refused under section 18(h) of 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](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Jan Torres  
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