

Media Release (27/05/2021)

Public health experts say New Zealanders should get vaccinated as soon as the vaccine is available.

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 should be everyone's top priority in 2021, says the [New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine](#) (NZCPHM).

The College's members have been part of the frontline of defending the country against the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year.

We have much to be grateful for in New Zealand, if we look at the situation in most other countries around the world, says College President Dr Jim Miller. However, we cannot rely solely on strict border control measures indefinitely. A wide-reaching immunisation campaign will be needed to develop the level of population immunity to the virus that may allow for border controls to be relaxed and put us on a path to managing life with the virus.

With no sustained community transmission of COVID-19 currently, New Zealand is fortunate to be in the position of not having to rush vaccine roll-out. This gives time to plan for equitable implementation.

It is important to note that safety requirements have not been relaxed in the prompt approval of the COVID-19 vaccines, says Dr Miller. The vast injection of funding worldwide has allowed accelerated processes for development of the vaccines. The robustness of the assessment for the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines has not been compromised. In New Zealand, Medsafe has the role of looking at the data from the worldwide clinical trials and immunisation campaigns and taking decisions on what should be approved for implementation. Medsafe has advised that the Pfizer vaccine that has recently been approved for use in New Zealand is both effective and very safe for use.

New Zealand will be watching the latest developments with regards to the effectiveness of current vaccines against COVID-19 infection and illness very carefully in the months to come, but initial results overseas are very promising.

Getting vaccinated when the vaccine is available is an important protection not only for yourself, but also for everyone around you. This includes those who might be more vulnerable to severe infection, such as the elderly or ill, or who cannot have the vaccine say the College. We urge all New Zealanders to get vaccinated as soon as possible once the vaccine becomes widely available.

There is good information available on the Ministry of Health's website about New Zealand's vaccination plan, including a call for additional vaccinators.

[COVID-19: Our vaccine roll-out plan | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

Useful information is also available on the Immunisation Advisory Centre's website:

<https://www.immune.org.nz/covid-19-vaccines>

The College's Immunisation Policy is available on our website:

https://www.nzcphm.org.nz/media/137767/2017_11_15_nzcphm_immunisation_policy_statement_reviewed_2017_.pdf

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For further information, contact Pam Watson 04 472-9183

About the NZCPHM

The [New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine](#) is the professional body representing the medical specialty of public health medicine in New Zealand. It has 222 members, all of whom are medical doctors, including 185 fully qualified Public Health Medicine Specialists, with most others being registrars completing advanced training in the specialty of public health medicine.

Public Health Medicine is the branch of medicine concerned with the assessment of population health and health care needs, the development of policy and strategy, health promotion, the control and prevention of disease, and the organisation of services. The College strives to achieve health gain and equity for our population, reducing inequalities across socioeconomic and cultural groups, and promoting environments in which everyone can be healthy.