

**-Vaccination / Virus****Are there Covid risks after jabs?**

Nelson Mail · 2 Jul 2021 · 8 · Florence Kerr

As the two-dose Pfizer vaccine is rolled out across Aotearoa, some people are still mystified about what exactly the vaccine protects you from, what it does not protect you from, and whether it stops you passing Covid-19 on to others.



Without answers to these questions, a number of people are still uncertain about receiving either one or both Pfizer vaccine doses. (The Pfizer vaccine needs two doses, as the second dose increases protection.)

A Horizon Research survey released in April found that although 69 per cent of New Zealanders aged 16 years and over would likely have the vaccine, about 20 per cent of those surveyed were still unconvinced.

A vaccine that produces full immunity does not exist for any virus but the Covid-19 vaccine that New Zealand is using is one of the most effective on the market.

Trial data shows that those who receive both Pfizer vaccine doses have a 95 per cent lower risk and were 20 times less likely to get Covid-19, than those who did not receive the vaccine.

So there is still a small chance you can get Covid-19 even if you are vaccinated but, importantly, the trials have also found that vaccinated people who get infected have a much less serious illness – sometimes without symptoms at all.

There is still concern that vaccinated people can pass the virus on. More data and information on this will become available as the global vaccine rollout continues but, for now, the Health Ministry in Aotearoa advises that people need to assume there is still a risk of transmission. It is also important to still get tested if you have Covid-19 symptoms, even if you have been fully vaccinated.

Recent research has shown that immunity following natural infection remains for at least six months and currently the expectation is that vaccine immunity will be even longer.

Again, this will become clear as more real-world data and information becomes available.

What about those people who do not get their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine?

The Horizon Research survey found that while 75 per cent of those who said they would get the vaccine would get both shots, 26 per cent indicated they were unlikely to go back for the second dose and 10 per cent said they would not. Data from both clinical trials and real-world vaccine rollouts have demonstrated that people who do not get the second shot will still have some form of protection but it may not be as strong or long-lasting.

Even for those who receive

both doses, it can take a few weeks after the second one for your body to develop strong immunity.

At this stage, researchers also do not know if people will need to return for vaccine booster doses, over and above the initial two.

Not enough time has passed since the first vaccinations as part of the clinical trials to show if booster shots will help but our Health Ministry says it is following the research closely.

Reporting disclosure statement: This post was reviewed by The Whole Truth: Covid-19 Vaccination expert panel member Dr Dianne Sika-Paotonu, Associate Dean Pacific and senior lecturer in pathology and molecular medicine at Otago University.