

COVID-19 Vaccination Information Sheet for Older Persons

As the Covid-19 pandemic and vaccine situation continues to evolve worldwide and in Singapore, it is important to keep yourself updated with the latest facts and information. The information presented here is accurate as of 2 February 2021 and will be updated as needed.



Why is vaccination important?

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is an important means to protect ourselves and those around us from the virus, and to reduce the risk of local outbreaks. As Singapore re-opens our borders for travel and business, getting yourself vaccinated helps protect our community from COVID-19.

Why is vaccination recommended for older persons?

The risk of severe COVID-19 and death is higher for older persons, especially those with chronic medical conditions or weakened immune systems.



General vaccine information (Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine)

Vaccination helps our immune system to make antibodies, which are special proteins that protect our bodies from attacks by viruses and bacteria. This vaccine has been carefully studied by health experts in Singapore and other countries, and found to be 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 disease. This vaccine has good safety and effectiveness results, even in older persons and those with medical conditions.



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The vaccine is injected into the upper arm muscle, similar to the flu vaccine. It consists of 2 doses, the second dose being given 21 days later. More advice and information are provided on the MOH website (<https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/vaccination>) accessible via the QR code.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

- The side effects are listed below. Most are mild and usually get better within a few days.
- You may experience these side effects slightly more with the second dose of the vaccine.
- In very rare cases, a severe allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis may occur. Symptoms include difficulty breathing, a drop in blood pressure or rash. It usually happens within the first 15 to 30 minutes and is treatable. You will be monitored for 30 minutes after getting vaccinated, so that any severe reactions can be detected and treated promptly.

Side Effects	How to Manage
Pain, redness, swelling at injection site	Take 1 to 2 Paracetamol tablets, every 6 hours as needed
Fever, chills	
Headaches, muscle pain, joint pain	
Tiredness	Rest
Lymph node swelling at neck or arms	Usually gets better by itself in 7 to 10 days. Please seek medical attention if lymph node swelling does not improve.



See a doctor if:

- Your side effects persist or get worse
- Your fever lasts for more than 48 hours (2 days)

Frequently Asked Questions (Specific to Older Persons)

1

Can I just take 1 dose?

The first dose starts building protection, but the second dose provides long term immunity and full protection. Hence, 2 doses are required for the vaccination to be considered valid.

2

Can I still get COVID-19 with the vaccination?

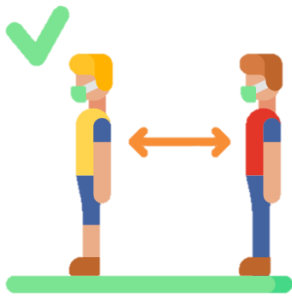
Will the vaccine protect against new variants of COVID-19?

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is 95% effective. Although it is still possible to get infected, the risk is much lower. It also takes 1 to 2 weeks after completing the second dose to achieve full protection. Studies are ongoing to assess the effectiveness of the vaccine against new variants, but meanwhile, the vaccine is very effective against the major virus strains seen so far.

3

How long will immunity from the vaccination last?

Immunity from this vaccine is at least as good as immunity after catching the virus itself. Protection is at least 3 to 6 months, simply because the vaccine is recently introduced to the public. More information about immunity will be available as time passes.



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Do I still need to continue other protective measures after taking the vaccine?

Yes, not everyone has been vaccinated, in Singapore and worldwide. There are also people who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. For these reasons, do continue to protect yourself by wearing masks, cleaning your hands, and practising safe distancing.



5

Can I take other vaccines together?

No, combining the COVID-19 vaccine with other vaccines is not recommended. Any other vaccines should be taken at least 14 days apart from the COVID-19 vaccine, i.e. 14 days before getting the first dose and 14 days after completing the second dose.

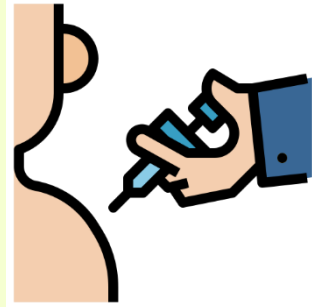
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Can I take the vaccine if I am on blood thinning medications, low platelet count, or have a bleeding disorder?

Yes, you can take the COVID-19 vaccine even if you are on blood thinning medications such as warfarin or apixaban. You should press firmly at the injection site for at least 5 minutes to reduce the risk of bleeding under the skin.

Anti-platelet medicines like aspirin or clopidogrel, usually given for heart conditions, are not considered blood thinners, and persons taking these can get vaccinated.

Persons with low platelet counts are also allowed to get the injection, unless your platelets are known to be less than 50,000. Pressing firmly at the injection site is also advised for persons with low platelet counts or other bleeding disorders.



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As Singapore has very few community cases and I do not go out much, do I still need to be vaccinated?

It is wise to get protected now while there are not many cases in Singapore because the situation can change very quickly.

Immunity from vaccination takes at least 5-6 weeks to develop. Furthermore, in the event of a surge in community cases, going out, even to get vaccinated, will be riskier.

8

Is the vaccine safe for those older than 80 years of age?

Older persons, including those over 80, appear to have fewer side effects from the vaccine. The benefits of protection are much greater in older people because the risk of severe COVID-19 in older persons is much higher. **If you have concerns whether you are suitable for vaccination, do discuss these with your doctor.**

9

My elderly mother is very frail, immobile and have multiple medical conditions. Is it still safe for her to take the vaccine?

Vaccine studies included older persons and those with medical conditions, and there were NO increased problems or deaths in these groups caused by the vaccine, compared to those who did not get the vaccine. Millions of people have now received these COVID-19 vaccinations in countries like the US, UK and Europe, and investigations have not shown any concerns about the safety of this vaccine for older persons and those with multiple medical problems. **If you have concerns whether you are suitable for vaccination, or have recently recovered from an illness, do discuss these with your doctor.**

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Who should not get the COVID-19 vaccine?

MOH recommends against getting the COVID 19 vaccine for the following:

- Persons with active cancers or undergoing cancer treatment (on chemotherapy, immunotherapy, radiation therapy), untreated cancers or on palliative care.
- Persons with extremely weakened immune systems from transplant within the past 3 months, or taking immunotherapy (such as rituximab) for non-cancer conditions.
- Persons who have had severe allergic reactions such as anaphylaxis to other medications, vaccine, insect stings or food.

If you have concerns whether you are suitable for vaccination, do discuss these with your doctor.