



Should I have the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine?

The BNT 162b2 [mRNA] vaccine for COVID-19 was developed by the pharmaceutical company Pfizer™ in 2020 and is one of the vaccines approved for use in Australia. This is a patient decision aid designed to help you decide whether or not to have the Pfizer vaccine if it is offered to you. It can be used during a visit with a healthcare provider and is based on the published results of the vaccine's trial. [1]

What does getting the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine involve?

An injection of around 0.3 mls of vaccine in your arm at your first appointment and the same again 3 weeks later. Sometimes during an outbreak and/or if there are limited vaccine supplies, you may be asked to wait up to 6 weeks for your second dose. It is required by law that your vaccination is recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register by the person giving you the vaccine. You can access your immunisation record through Medicare and myGov as well as your GP.

What are your options?

You may not be able to choose which COVID-19 vaccine you can have. This decision aid is for people who have been offered the Pfizer vaccine. You can choose to have the vaccine or not have the vaccine at this time. It is safe to have the vaccine if you have had COVID-19 in the past and it may actually boost your immunity. This vaccine is also safe if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. It is the preferred vaccine in people less than 60 years old.

You should NOT have the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine if:

- Have an allergy to Polyethylene Glycol (PEG) which is one of the ingredients in the vaccine
- You are currently unwell, particularly if you have a fever
- You are under 12 years (we are waiting on the results of the vaccine trials in this group)
- You have had the influenza vaccine (or others) in the past week. You should not have the influenza vaccine until at least a week after vaccination. (There needs to be a space of two weeks between these)
- You have had allergen immunotherapy or venom immunotherapy injections within the past 48 hours

About this leaflet

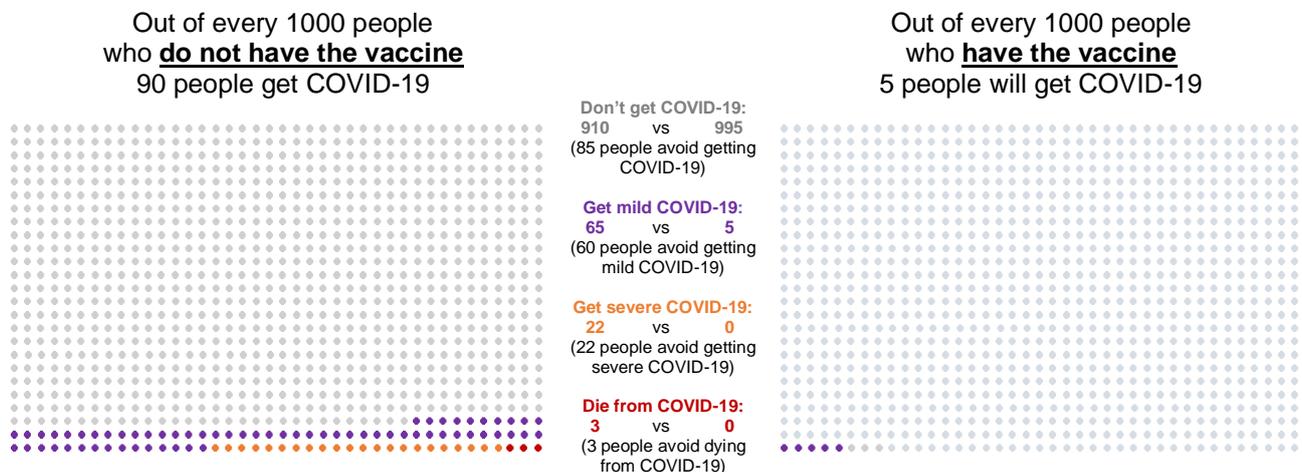
This leaflet was prepared by Professor Lyndal Trevena from the 'Ask Share Know' (ASK) NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence.

It is based on the following research paper: Polack FP et al. Safety and Efficacy of the BNT162b2 mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine. New England Journal of Medicine 2020 383(27): 2603-2615

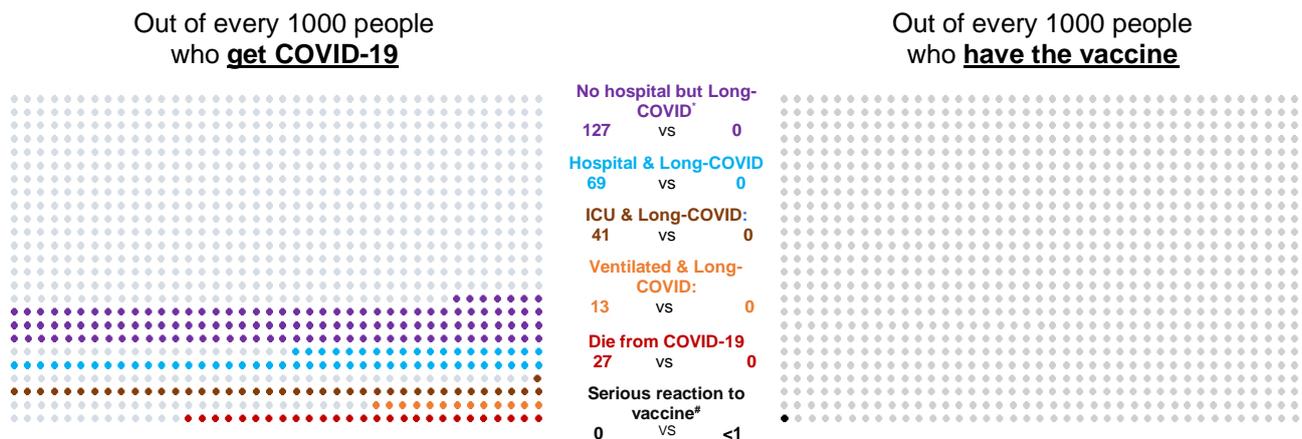
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What are the benefits and harms of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine?

The benefits of vaccines depend on how much COVID-19 there is in Australia. We can never be sure about the size of future COVID-19 outbreaks. The numbers below give an idea of the benefits of the Pfizer vaccine when there is a large outbreak (similar to the USA in 2020).



What are the serious harms of getting COVID-19 or getting the Pfizer vaccine?



* Long-COVID is when people have symptoms that last for months or years after COVID-19. We are still learning more about this.

Recent reports have linked the Pfizer COVID vaccine to heart inflammation (myocarditis or pericarditis), particularly in younger people. Estimates vary, but it is likely to be in the order of 0.001 out of 1000 people vaccinated.

What is most important to you?

To help you decide, you can tick the boxes you think are important and/or add your own reasons.

For getting the vaccine:

- Avoiding getting COVID-19 myself
- Helping others to avoid getting COVID-19
- Helping to reduce the need for restrictions (for example, border closures, lockdowns, masks)

Against getting the vaccine:

- Avoiding vaccine side effects
- Other reasons: