

Change in gap between COVID-19 Vaccine doses

Key messages

General

- In response to the ongoing Delta outbreak the Ministry of Health is advising New Zealanders to consider a shorter gap between doses of the Pfizer vaccine than the current standard of six weeks.
- We need two things to protect ourselves, our whānau and our communities in this outbreak:
 - First we need as many people as possible to have their first dose to be partially protected;
 - Secondly we need all those people to be fully vaccinated with two doses as soon as possible;
- Reducing the gap between doses to three weeks or over means more people can be fully vaccinated sooner, increasing our community immunity.
- The two doses of the Pfizer vaccine must be given at least three weeks apart.

The six-week gap

- In August we extended the standard gap between first and second doses of the Pfizer vaccine from three weeks to six weeks to allow us to give one dose (partial protection) to a larger number of people faster.
- At the time we said that a shorter time between the two doses was recommended in some cases. This included people at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 such as border workers.
- Since that time the Delta outbreak has increased the risk of contracting COVID-19 for everyone in New Zealand, no matter where in the country you are.
- Because of this increased risk the Ministry is now advising all New Zealanders to consider a shorter gap of three weeks or over between their two doses, instead of the standard six weeks.
- Throughout the response we have aimed to ensure our approach was flexible and responsive to the situation.

Your appointments

- From this morning (Wed), new bookings made through Bookmyvaccine.nz and via the COVID Vaccine Healthline 0800 28 29 26 default back to three-weeks between first and second doses.
- If you already have vaccinations booked around six weeks apart, you can keep your second appointment as it is, or choose to change it. Either way the important thing is that you get two doses of the vaccine to be fully vaccinated.