



## VACCINATION INFORMATION SHEET PFIZER-BIONTECH / COMIRNATY COVID-19 VACCINE

This vaccine has been approved by the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) for use in Singapore under the direction of the Ministry of Health. Read this information carefully. Consult your doctor or clinic if you have questions.

### 1. What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can range from mild to severe disease. Spread is mainly through droplets, airborne particles, or touching contaminated surfaces. Symptoms appear 2 to 14 days after exposure, and can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose or loss of smell or taste. Complications can include respiratory failure, heart attacks, blood clots and other long-term problems.

### 2. What is the Pfizer-BioNTech / Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine?

The Pfizer-BioNTech / Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine protects against COVID-19. The vaccine contains messenger RNA (mRNA) which helps your immune system to produce protection. The vaccine reduces the risks of infection and severe disease from COVID-19, and has good protection against the current virus variants. The vaccine consists of 2 doses taken at the recommended interval of 8 weeks or at least 21 days apart.

Additional doses are recommended for the following persons:

- a. Persons with severely weakened immune systems<sup>1</sup> should receive a third dose of the vaccine, two months after their second dose to complete their vaccination, for better protection
- b. Persons aged 12 years and above should receive a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine<sup>2</sup> under the National Vaccination Programme from about five months after the completion of their earlier vaccination, regardless of whether they had a previous COVID-19 infection. If the person had a recent COVID-19 infection, the timing of the booster should also be at least 28 days after the infection.
- c. Persons aged 80 years and above, living in aged care facilities and/or are medically vulnerable should receive a **second** booster dose of an mRNA vaccine<sup>2</sup> from about five months after the first booster dose.
- d. Persons aged 50-79 years can also receive a **second** booster dose of an mRNA vaccine from about five months after the first booster dose.

The vaccine is safe, but like other vaccines and medications, side effects can happen. These are usually mild and get better in 1 to 3 days. Section 6 covers vaccine side effects, and Section 7 covers post-vaccination advice.

### 3. Who should get the vaccine? Who should not get the vaccine?

You should get this vaccine to be protected against COVID-19. You must be 5 years or older.

You should **NOT** get this vaccine if you had a high-risk allergic reaction (including anaphylaxis), to a prior dose of this vaccine if it occurred within 4 hours of vaccination, or if you have a known allergy to any ingredients in this vaccine, such as Polyethylene glycol (PEG) (see Section 5). If you had an allergy or anaphylaxis to other vaccines, you **CAN** receive this vaccine without the need for an allergist review.

Tell your doctor or nurse before getting this vaccine if you:

- had a fever in the past 24 hours
- have active cancer treatment, organ/stem cell transplantation, or are immunocompromised
- have a low platelet count, bleeding disorder, or taking blood thinning medications

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<sup>1</sup> This includes transplant patients, cancer patients on active treatment, hematological cancers, persons on treatments that suppress the immune system, end-stage kidney disease and advanced or untreated HIV.

<sup>2</sup> The Moderna/Spikevax vaccine is only for persons aged 18 years and older

- had COVID-19 infection before, or received another COVID-19 vaccine

Most people with the above conditions or situations can receive the vaccine, but the doctor or nurse may provide additional advice.

**4. How is the Pfizer-BioNTech / Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine given?**

This vaccine is given as an injection into the muscle of your upper arm.

**5. What are the ingredients in the Pfizer-BioNTech / Comirnaty COVID-19 Vaccine?**

The Pfizer-BioNTech / Comirnaty COVID-19 Vaccine includes the following ingredients: BNT162b2 mRNA; (4-hydroxybutyl) azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis(2-hexyldecanoate); 2-[(polyethylene glycol)-2000]-N,N-ditetradecylacetamide; 1,2-Distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine; cholesterol; sucrose; and buffer containing phosphate (older formulation) or Tromethamine and Tris (hydroxymethyl) aminoethane hydrochloride (new formulation).

**6. What are the possible side effects? How do I manage the side effects?**

Like other vaccines and medications, side effects can happen. Most side effects are mild or moderate, and usually get better within a few days. The table below lists some common side effects that have been reported with this vaccine, and how to manage them.

Side Effects	How to Manage
Pain, redness, swelling at the injection site	Those with fever are advised to self-isolate at home until the fever subsides. Paracetamol 1 to 2 tablets every 6 hours for adults or dosed according to the child's weight as needed
Fever, chills	
Headache, muscle pain, joint pain	
Tiredness	Rest
Lymph node swelling at neck or arms	Usually gets better by itself in a week or so

- See a doctor if side effects persist or get worse.
- See a doctor to get tested for COVID if you develop cough, sore throat or runny nose, since you don't develop full protection until at least 2 weeks after completing the second dose.
- Very rarely, this vaccine may cause a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis. Symptoms include difficulty breathing, swelling of your face/throat/eyes/lips, fast heartbeat, dizziness/weakness, or rash. If you experience these, **seek medical attention immediately**. Call 995 or go to the nearest A&E immediately.
- Very rarely, this vaccine may cause heart inflammation (myocarditis). Symptoms include chest pain, difficulty breathing or abnormal heartbeats. If you experience these, seek medical attention immediately.
- If you experience side effects after vaccination which are not listed above, please consult your doctor.

**7. Any Other Advice?**

Advice for different groups of vaccine recipients:

- If you are on blood thinning medicines, press firmly on the injection site for 5 minutes.
- If you are on active cancer treatment, recent organ/stem cell transplantation or are on aggressive immunotherapy, please consult your specialist to discuss if you can get this vaccine.
- Pregnant women and those planning to get pregnant should get vaccinated. Vaccination carries significant benefits for pregnant women and women trying to conceive. There is no evidence that vaccination is harmful in pregnancy.

**Before vaccination:**

- Continue to take your medications as usual, and do not stop them just for the vaccination.
- Avoid dehydration or skipping meals, to reduce risk of fainting after vaccination.
- If you have a fever or are acutely ill, you should re-schedule your vaccination.

**After vaccination:**

It is advisable to avoid the following after vaccination, to reduce the risk of adverse effects:

- Avoid drinking alcohol for 12-24 hours after getting vaccinated
- Avoid taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for pain or fever in the 1-2 days after vaccination. (NSAIDs include medications like ibuprofen, ketoprofen, naproxen, and diclofenac.)
- Avoid strenuous physical activity or intense exercise for two weeks after each dose.

**8. How do I report side effects?**

If you experience severe or unusual side effects, see your doctor, who will be able to advise you and report the side effects to HSA. You may also report side effects directly to HSA on a form by scanning this **QR code**.

*The content of this information sheet was updated on 17/06/22. For the latest COVID-19 vaccine consumer information, please refer to the HSA website at <https://www.hsa.gov.sg/covid-19-information-and-advisories>*

