

Encouraging seniors to be vaccinated against COVID-19

By Agency for Integrated Care

Singapore's COVID-19 vaccination programme has made good progress since its commencement in January 2021. As of 7 March 2021, we have administered almost 600,000 doses of the vaccine to about 379,000 individuals in Singapore. As part of this group, more than 217,000 have received their second dose and thus, completed the full vaccination regimen.

As more vaccine supplies have arrived, MOH is able to bring forward the vaccination for seniors aged 60 to 69 years, which was originally planned to commence from end-March. All seniors in this age group would have received their invitation letters within the week of 8 March 2021.

If you have patients within the age group of 60 years and above, you may wish to encourage them to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Some common FAQs are listed below for reference:

- 1 Is COVID-19 vaccination safe for those with chronic illnesses such as hypertension, high cholesterol and diabetes?**
Yes, no safety concerns were reported for the group of people with the above-mentioned medical conditions who participated in the Pfizer-BioNTech's phase 3 trials. In fact, it is even more important for people with chronic illnesses to be vaccinated as they are at higher risk of serious, life-threatening disease and death, should they be infected with COVID-19. Apart from protecting themselves, they will also be protecting their loved ones if they're vaccinated.
- 2 How effective is the vaccine in preventing COVID-19? Can vaccinated persons get infected with COVID-19? Are they less able to transmit the disease? How long does the vaccine offer protection from COVID-19?**
The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was shown to be around 95% effective in preventing COVID-19. Most vaccines that protect against viral illnesses also prevent the transmission of the virus by those that are vaccinated. We will be monitoring the data of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine as it is rolled out both overseas and in Singapore. In general, optimal protection from vaccination occurs after the second dose, and becomes fully effective around two weeks after the second dose.
- 3 Is the protection from the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine weaker in the elderly?**
No. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is similarly effective across all age groups, which was shown to be around 95%.
- 4 What are the different types of COVID-19 vaccines in Singapore?**
The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is the second COVID-19 vaccine to be authorised for pandemic use by HSA, after the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. We will progressively roll out the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for individuals aged 18 years and above.

Below is a summary of the differences between the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines.

Item Detail	Pfizer-BioNTech	MODERNA
Type of vaccine	mRNA w/lipid nanoparticle	mRNA w/lipid nanoparticle
Vaccine efficacy	95%	95%
Vaccine dosage	0.3 mL 30 mcg	0.5mL 100 mcg
Dilution needed Gentle mixing	Yes (1.8mL saline) Do not shake vaccine vial	NO DILUTION Do not shake vaccine vial
Shelf-life after delivery to vaccination clinic	5 days (at 2°C-8°C, fridge) 6 hours (at < 25°C)	30 days (at 2°C-8°C, fridge) 12 hours (at < 25°C)
Number of doses per vial Vaccinees to schedule	5-6 doses per vial 5-6 patients	10 doses per vial 10 patients
Eligibility Contraindications	Persons ≥ 16 years old Anaphylaxis etc	Persons ≥ 18 years old Anaphylaxis etc
Dose #2	Day 21	Day 28

While COVID-19 vaccination is voluntary, we strongly encourage Singaporeans and long-term residents who are medically eligible to come forward for vaccination when their turn comes, so that as a society, we can keep each other safe from the disease.

Should you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccination programme, please contact the AIC GP Engagement team at 6632 1199 or gp@aic.sg.