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8 MARCH 2021

Govt purchases enough Pfizer vaccines for whole country



RT HON JACINDA ARDERN



HON CHRIS HIPKINS

Prime Minister COVID-19 Response

The Government has guaranteed that every New Zealander will have access to the Pfizer/BioNTech

vaccine, after securing an additional 8.5 million doses, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced today.

“The Government has signed an advance purchase agreement for 8.5 million additional doses, enough to vaccinate 4.25 million people. The vaccines are expected to arrive in New Zealand during the second half of the year,” Jacinda Ardern said.

“This brings our total Pfizer order to 10 million doses or enough for 5 million people to get the two shots needed to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.”

The Government’s original agreement with Pfizer was for approximately 1.5 million doses, enough to vaccinate 750,000 people.

“The decision to make Pfizer New Zealand’s primary vaccine provider, was based on the fact the Pfizer vaccine has been shown to be about 95 percent effective at preventing symptomatic infection.

“It also means all New Zealanders will have the chance to access the same vaccine.

“Whilst the Pfizer vaccine does need to be kept at ultra-cold temperatures, this challenge is offset by only having to deal with one vaccine, rather than multiple vaccines with multiple protocols. It will simplify our vaccine roll out.

“This purchase marks a significant milestone in New Zealand’s fight against COVID-19. We can take heart that we’ve now secured one of the strongest and more effective tools in the COVID-19 toolkit.

“With every person who gets vaccinated, New Zealand gets one step closer to moving away from restrictions to manage COVID-19,” Jacinda Ardern said.

“This is a significant addition to our COVID-19 vaccine portfolio. It indicates our confidence in the vaccine’s performance to date and our demonstrated ability to administer it,” COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins said.

“The Ministry of Health is now working with Pfizer on a delivery schedule for the additional vaccines which will ensure a smooth rollout and a scaling up of our vaccination programme as we start to immunise the general public from the middle of the year.

“Consideration is also being given to how best to use vaccine doses that don’t end up being needed in New Zealand. We are working on options for donating surplus doses across our wider portfolio to the Pacific and developing countries worldwide.

“We are committed to ensuring that any doses not needed here are put to good use elsewhere. Options could include delaying delivery to New Zealand, in order to free up supply for other countries

in the short-term, or donating spare vaccines to other countries.

“We are also working closely with the Realm countries of Niue, Tokelau, and the Cook Islands, as well as our close neighbours Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu to provide access to our vaccine portfolio and provide wider support for vaccine roll-out,” Chris Hipkins said.

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