

(Manch, 2021a)

Government releases Covid-19 vaccine delivery schedule, elderly and people with pre-existing conditions to be prioritised

Thomas Manch · 13:00, Mar 10 2021



The Government intends to dole out the Covid-19 vaccine to about half of New Zealand by the end of June, and the elderly and people with pre-existing conditions are "priority populations" to receive early access.

A long-awaited schedule for the Pfizer vaccine roll-out was published by Covid-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins on Wednesday, and showed the country carved into four groups.

"This is a balanced plan that prioritises reducing the chance of future outbreaks while protecting our elders, those with underlying health conditions and those who live in locations where we know outbreaks have occurred," Hipkins said in a statement.

The first group to receive the vaccine, border workers and their families, would be completed by the end of March.

The second, 480,000 frontline healthcare workers and people living in "high-risk settings" has already begun and would continue until May.

The 234,000 people living in these "high-risk settings" include older people and people with pre-existing health conditions in the Counties Manukau District Health Board (DHB) area, people in residential aged-care facilities, and older people living in a family environment that poses a similar risk to aged-care homes.

"Anyone who lives in the Counties Manukau DHB area who is 65 and older or who has an underlying health condition is also in Group 2. This recognises that there are many border operations and MIQ facilities and their workforces based in this area," Hipkins said.

The third round of the roll-outs would be for all other people aged 75 years old, then 65 years old, then people with pre-existing health conditions which include heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, respiratory conditions, kidney disease, and cancer.

The Government hopes to begin vaccinating this group – 1.7 million people in total – in May.

The fourth group is the remainder of the population, 2m people who will start receiving the vaccine from July.



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thomas.manch@stuff.co.nz

The director-general of health Dr Ashley Bloomfield on Tuesday, after a parliamentary select committee, said that he wanted 90 per cent of the country vaccinated by the end of 2021.

The ministry held no specific target for how many New Zealanders it wanted to vaccinate, as it wanted to vaccinate everyone available, he said.

Bloomfield said there was international consensus that a sufficient target for a population was having 75 per cent with some immunity.

"We're not aiming for 75 per cent and then 'job done'," he said.

The Covid-19 vaccine roll-out

Group One, February – May:

- 1a) 15,000 border, managed isolation and quarantine workers
- 1b) 40,000 family members of border, managed isolation and quarantine workers

Group two, February – May:

- 2a) 57,000 frontline healthcare workers who could be exposed to Covid-19
- 2b) 183,000 frontline workers who could expose vulnerable people to Covid-19, and 234,000 people living in "high risk" settings.

- People in "high risk" settings include people over 65 years old living in the Counties Manukau DHB area, people in aged-care residences, and people over 65 years old living in whānau environments which pose a similar risk to aged-care residences.

Group three, beginning May:

3a) 317,000 people aged 75 years and above

3b) 432,000 people aged 65 years and above

3c) 730,000 people with "relevant" underlying health conditions and/or disabled people, and pregnant people

- Relevant health conditions include coronary heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or chronic respiratory conditions, kidney diseases and cancer.

Group four, July onwards:

4) The rest of New Zealand above the age of 16 years old, approximately 2 million people