

# Vaccine against coronavirus

## – Comirnaty (BioNTech and Pfizer)

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The novel coronavirus causes respiratory tract infection. Many people experience either mild or no symptoms, but some may become seriously ill. The elderly, and those who already have certain other diseases from before are at greatest risk of a serious disease course or death. The vaccine protects against a severe COVID-19 disease course.

### **Who should have the coronavirus vaccine?**

Coronavirus vaccines offered through the national immunisation programme are available for people who are living in Norway. The vaccine is free and is voluntary.

### **How do I get the vaccine?**

Check the website of your municipality for information about who is being offered the vaccine, how vaccination is being organised and when it will take place.

### **How is this vaccine given?**

The vaccine is injected into the upper arm. Before vaccination, you will be asked if you are feeling well and if you have had reactions to other vaccines you have had before. Remember to say if you have had COVID-19 or had a coronavirus vaccine before, are pregnant, have allergies, use medication or have other health problems. Follow the guidelines for the number of doses and intervals that apply to your group. The vaccination centre can help you with this. It is important to take the doses at the scheduled time. It is common to postpone vaccination with acute illness and with a fever above 38 °C. After vaccination, you will be asked to wait at the vaccination site for at least 20 minutes.

### **How does this vaccine work?**

The vaccine contains the recipe (messenger RNA) for the spikes on the coronavirus. The body makes harmless copies of these spikes that the immune system can practise on. In this way, the immune system learns to recognise the coronavirus spikes and can defend the body if it becomes infected with the virus. The messenger RNA is quickly broken down by the body and has no effect on genetic material. The vaccine does not contain live virus and does not cause COVID-19 disease. The coronavirus vaccine acts to prevent disease. It cannot cure an ongoing illness.

### **How well does this vaccine work?**

The vaccines do not completely protect against further spread of infection. Therefore, it is important to continue to follow the current infection control advice.

## **Side effects**

Most of the side effects occur in the first few days after vaccination. The coronavirus vaccines give more of the common side effects than other vaccines. The symptoms are usually mild to moderate and go away after a few days, but some get more severe symptoms. Younger people often have slightly more severe side effects than older people.

Most vaccinated people have pain at the injection site. Other common side effects include fatigue, headache, muscle aches, chills, joint pain and fever. These side effects are more common after dose 2.

Serious side effects are rare. Rare side effects include heart inflammation (myocarditis and pericarditis). These usually occur after dose 2 and most often among adolescents and young adults. Rare side effects such as severe allergic reactions and heart inflammation can be treated if they occur. We cannot rule out hitherto unknown rare side effects, or side effects that only appear long after vaccination.

## **What do I do if I get side effects?**

If you experience unexpected, severe or prolonged symptoms, contact your doctor or another healthcare worker for assessment and advice. This applies regardless of whether you believe it is due to the vaccine or not. Healthcare workers have a duty to report any serious or unexpected reactions that they suspect are due to a vaccine. You can also send in a notification yourself via [helsenorge.no](https://helsenorge.no).

## **Conditional approval**

This coronavirus vaccine has been tested in large studies where several thousand people received the vaccine. The studies were carried out in the same way as for other vaccines, but the observation time is shorter. The medicine regulatory authorities have given the vaccine a conditional approval. This means that there are enough data to assess that the benefit of the vaccine far outweighs the risk, but that the vaccine producer must continue the studies and continuously provide data to the medicine regulatory authorities when they become available.

## **Which vaccine have I received?**

When you have been given a coronavirus vaccine, it will be registered in the Norwegian Immunisation Registry, SYSVAK. You can access your information at [helsenorge.no](https://helsenorge.no)

## **Do you want to know more?**

Please ask your doctor or other healthcare worker or visit the Norwegian Institute of Public Health's website at [fhi.no/cip](https://fhi.no/cip)