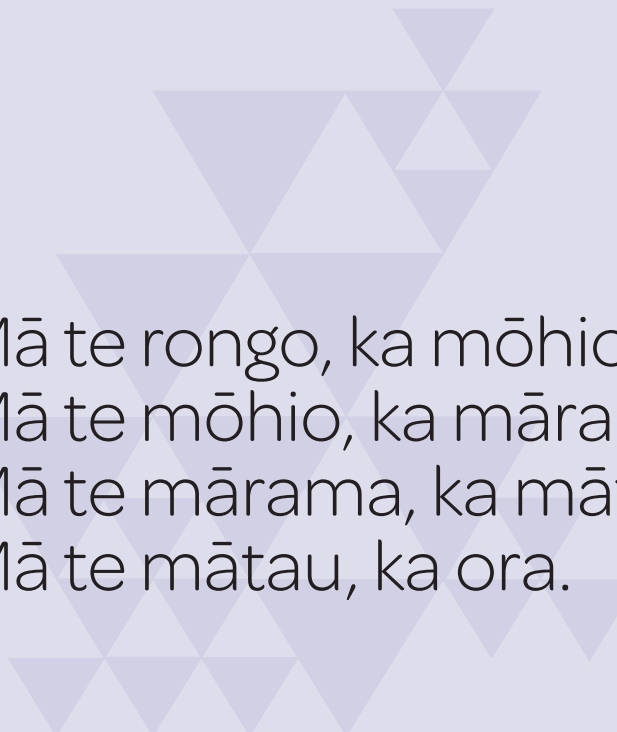





# COVID-19 vaccination: Responding to false and misleading information and scams.

**A guide for health professionals and community leaders**



Mā te rongō, ka mōhio;  
Mā te mōhio, ka mārama;  
Mā te mārama, ka mātau;  
Mā te mātau, ka ora.

From listening comes knowledge;  
from knowledge comes understanding;  
from understanding comes wisdom;  
from wisdom comes well-being.

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This guide will assist you in responding to COVID-19 vaccination concerns and where to go to get the facts.

It's all of our responsibility to keep the people of New Zealand informed with factual and reliable information.

# Get the facts

Getting vaccinated is a personal choice that everyone will make to protect themselves and their whānau. Get the facts to make the right decision for you.

Accurate and reliable information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Aotearoa include the below sources:

- Ministry of Health – [Health.govt.nz](https://www.health.govt.nz)
- Unite Against COVID-19 – [Covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)
- Local District Health Boards (DHBs) – Full list of DHB websites by searching 'district health boards' on [Ministry of Health](https://www.health.govt.nz) main website as above.
- Trusted information in te reo Māori and English can be found at [Karawhiau.nz](https://www.karawhiau.nz)
- Your GP, pharmacist, iwi health provider or other health professional.

Resources and information detailing aspects of the vaccine and the roll out can be found on the above websites and social media networks of these sources.

Misleading information may not be obvious. Use reliable sources to double check the facts.

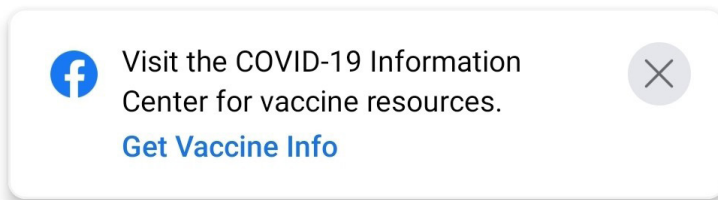


# Take care what is shared

**Not all information online is always factual and accurate.**

We can quickly and subconsciously accept news that aligns with our beliefs and negatively react to information that is different. It's important to take time and reflect when reading something about the COVID-19 vaccine, before acting.

Social media companies typically use algorithms to pick up false and misleading information. They may have a flag or small message on certain posts advising that the information is related to COVID-19 and will link you to a trusted source.



*Facebook COVID-19 information message*



*Instagram COVID-19 information message*

These aren't 100% foolproof. It's important to remain vigilant with the information shared or posted online.

Always cross-check and review COVID-19 vaccine information by using the reliable sources outlined in this guide.

# Report it

Any false or misleading information such as leaflets, publications or websites can be reported to CERT NZ – [Cert.govt.nz/report-covid-19-vaccine-scams-or-misinformation/](https://cert.govt.nz/report-covid-19-vaccine-scams-or-misinformation/) or call **0800 2378 69**.

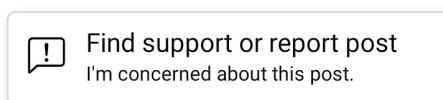
The public can report what they believe to be false or misleading information seen on social media to the respective social media platform e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc. These platforms will have buttons or forms in which they can report this information.

Facebook – [Facebook.com/help](https://www.facebook.com/help)

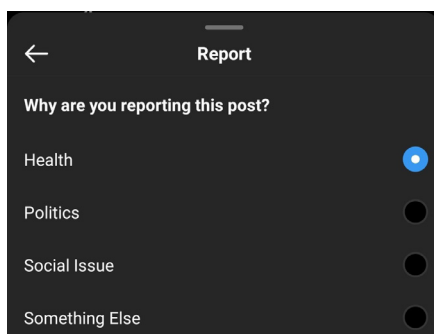
Twitter – [Help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies](https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies)

Instagram – [Help.instagram.com](https://help.instagram.com)

TikTok – [Support.tiktok.com](https://support.tiktok.com)



*Facebook report option*



*Instagram report option*

If a person or group is threatening violence towards others, report it to the Police by calling **105** (or **111** in an emergency).

# Discussing false and misleading information with others

You may need to engage with someone or a group who are spreading false and misleading information within your community or online.

It's easy to feel compelled to go and directly confront them. This is not the ideal approach and it may not always be obvious to them what information isn't true or factual.



Here are some tips on how you might address the situation:

- **Check if the information is false.** You can do this by going to reliable sources mentioned earlier to check the facts.
- **Acknowledge their concerns and fears.**
- **Don't mock them for having fears or vaccine concerns.**
- **Decide if it is best to engage directly.** It may be best to send them a message or talk to them privately about what they have said. If they have posted on social media and are getting a lot of interest you may want to report it to the platform. You have the option to remain anonymous.
- **Try to find areas you can both agree on.** If the person you are engaging with gets defensive and you feel that it is no longer constructive, it may be best not to proceed.
- **Share accurate resources.** If we share accurate, verified information we might encourage others too.

# COVID-19 vaccine scams

Scammers look for ways to trick people into sharing their personal or financial details, especially via phone and email.

Here is advice you can give:

- You will never be asked to pay for the vaccine or pay to secure your place in the queue.
- Official information about the vaccine will come from a trusted provider of health content ([see page 2](#))
- You will never be asked for personal information via text or email. If you see, it report it to CERT NZ at [Cert.govt.nz/covidscams](https://cert.govt.nz/covidscams) and don't reply to the message.
- If you receive an email, phone call or SMS asking for financial details in regards to the vaccine it will be a scam. Report it to [CERT NZ](#) immediately.
- A health worker will never come to your home to give you the vaccine, unless arranged with you beforehand.
- If you see something about the vaccine that doesn't seem right, report it to [CERT NZ](#) or call 0800 2378 69.



# Frequently Asked Questions

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## **What are the different kinds of false and misleading information?**

- **Misinformation** – false but not created with the intention of causing harm (e.g. misleading vaccine information shared with good intent).
- **Disinformation** – false and deliberately created to harm (e.g. ideologies and theories purposely giving misleading or dated vaccine information).
- **Malinformation** – based on reality, but is used to inflict harm on a person, organisation or country (e.g. leaks of private information that has been changed).
- **Scams** – based on reality, but seek to extort information and/or money (e.g. advertising advising of early access to vaccination for a fee).

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## **Why do people or organisations try to spread false or misleading information?**

Not all false information is spread on purpose but some is. Their aim may be to cause confusion and division and undermine our ability to respond to COVID-19 by taking advantage of people's concerns or questions of the COVID-19 vaccine – sometimes for financial gain.

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## **How is false and misleading information being spread?**

Organisations or people post online, hand out leaflets or verbally share or communicate false or misleading information in other ways.

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## **We are seeing false or misleading information spreading in our communities, what do we do about it?**

If there is a growing concern about specific false or misleading information undermining the COVID-19 response then raise it to [CERT NZ](#) and give as much detail as possible. They will ensure that it is passed on to the appropriate agency.

For those in the health sector, these should be raised to the [Ministry of Health](#) through your DHB.

You can also report false or misleading information to social media platforms ([see page 4](#)).

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## **What is the impact of false or misleading information spreading?**

There are many false and misleading news stories related to medical treatments including COVID-19 vaccines. Trusting these false stories could lead you to make decisions that may be harmful to your health and the health of your whānau.





Together, let's rise above false  
and misleading information

[Covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)



Unite  
against  
COVID-19