

21 January 2022

Tim Webb

By email: fyi-request-17860-e1d4edd9@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202117202

Tēnā koe Tim

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 6 December 2021 for information regarding COVID-19, COVID-19 vaccine certificates, and heart conditions.

Each part of your request is responded to below:

Please specify the actual harm caused directly to another person from a person who is unvaccinated for covid-19?

An unvaccinated person is more likely to be infected with and spread COVID-19 than a vaccinated individual. The following link provides information on vaccine effectiveness and other health measures: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/about-covid-19/covid-19-about-delta-variant. This shows that vaccination reduces transmission and the severity of COVID-19 if infected.

More studies and research regarding COVID-19 vaccines can be found on PubMed here: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/> and the New England Journal of Medicine here: www.nejm.org/coronavirus.

Please confirm that any person can contract covid-19 regardless of whether vaccinated or unvaccinated for covid-19?

Any person can contract COVID-19 whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated. As you have been advised, vaccination reduces the transmission and severity of COVID-19 symptoms and likelihood of fatality if infected.

Please confirm that a person vaccinated for covid-19 can be positive and pass on the covid-19 virus to another person regardless of covid-19 vaccine status?

While a vaccinated person can spread COVID-19, the risk is greatly reduced. Vaccines are a critical aspect of the package of measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19. It is expected to reduce overall infection rate and the incidence of symptomatic disease, and therefore the risk of onward transmission within our communities. Getting vaccinated is the best way for New Zealanders to protect themselves, their whānau and communities from COVID-19. The vaccine helps prevent you from getting infected and having COVID-19 symptoms, or severe illness. This means you could have no COVID-19 symptoms or will have much fewer, milder symptoms and recover faster.

A summary of currently available data about the effect that vaccination has on the transmission of COVID-19 is available at: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/fully-vaccinated-people.html.

Will blood be used from a covid-19 vaccinated person in blood transfusions, and if so, what analysis has been done on the potential effects?

This part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Ministry. For information about blood and blood transfusions, please contact the New Zealand Blood Service at: www.nzblood.co.nz/contact-us/.

What are the privacy safeguards for the covid-19 passport and what are the penalties and liabilities in the event of a breach of privacy?

Every COVID-19 vaccine certificate generates a unique identifier for that certificate. Each certificate will be issued with a unique identifier captured within it, and this will be retained in the audit log. The jti (Json Web Token ID) of the My Vaccine Pass or the unique vaccine certificate identifier (UVCI) of the EU Digital COVID Certificate (EUDCC) will be held in the log, so it can be queried in the event of a fraud investigation or other relevant query.

If you request production of a My Vaccine Pass or International Travel Vaccination Certificate, the Ministry will retain an audit log record to enable investigation of any query about the legitimacy of a certificate issued or the use of the certificate. This will include the national health index (NHI) number of the person the certificate was issued to, the type of certificate, whether it is for an exemption or exception, the method by which the certificate was requested, how the certificate was delivered to the individual, and the certificate identifier, being the Json Web Token ID of the My Vaccine Pass or UVCI of the International Travel Vaccination Certificate, so that it can be queried in the event of a fraud, or other investigation. These records will also be used for internal Ministry statistical reporting. Please note, individuals will not be identified in any such reports produced.

Anyone who knowingly accesses or uses, or attempts to access or use, the Service for an unlawful purpose (including but not limited to fraud or attempted fraud or hacking or attempted hacking), may be liable to prosecution under New Zealand Law. If it's used fraudulently to get access to someone else's information, a person may face a fine of up to \$10,000 under section 212 of the Privacy Act 2020.

How many people have been admitted to hospital for heart conditions each year for the last 6 years in 10 year age bands including 2021 to date?

The Ministry is able to provide data reported by the district health boards on publicly funded hospital discharges, not hospital admissions. A hospital discharge is the formal release of a

patient from hospital and occurs when a patient leaves hospital to return home, transfers to another hospital or residential institution, or dies in hospital after formal admission.

The number of publicly funded hospital discharges since 2015 where heart disease was reported is attached to this letter as Document 1. Please note that people hospitalised multiple times (transfers, readmissions, multiple incidents) are counted each time.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a cursive-like shape.

Dom Harris
**Manager of the Deputy Chief Executive
COVID-19 Health System Response**

Publicly funded hospital discharges for heart diseases from 1 January 2015 to October 2021

	Total	00 to 09	10 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80+
2015/16	59341	326	479	787	1298	3975	8584	13529	14747	15616
2016/17	61523	280	485	822	1313	3798	8931	14152	15709	16033
2017/18	62490	343	459	929	1410	4017	9160	14223	16210	15739
2018/19	63810	359	507	885	1551	3907	9287	14263	16935	16116
2019/20	63351	312	482	855	1591	3861	8862	14425	16753	16210
2020/21	67695	339	500	1002	1731	4035	9579	15278	18336	16895
Jul 2021 - Oct 2022	22151	97	143	308	561	1311	3160	5071	5831	5669

Please note, this data was extracted on 20 December 2021

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT