



INFORMATION ON COVID-19 VACCINES

Technical and Programmatic Management

Bhutan's vaccination plan is guided by the National Immunization Policy and Strategic Guideline, 2011. The National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) advises the Ministry of Health on all technical matters related to immunization, including COVID-19 vaccines.

The Vaccine Preventable Disease Program (VPDP), Ministry of Health is responsible for planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of all immunization related activities in the country. VPDP will provide timely updates to the general public on COVID-19 vaccination.



What is COVID-19 Vaccine?

It is a vaccine that will help protect the people from getting sick with COVID-19 disease.



How do COVID-19 Vaccines work?

Like any other vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines will produce protective antibodies that will help the body fight against COVID-19 infection.



Is the COVID-19 Vaccine safe?

Yes, it is safe.

The vaccines have been recommended by the World Health Organization and already in use in many countries. The COVID-19 vaccines have undergone all the necessary steps of vaccine development to ensure their safety and effectiveness before approval for mass use.



Eligibility for Vaccines

1. Who should get the vaccine?

✓ All eligible people residing in Bhutan who are 18 years and above irrespective of nationality will get the vaccine.

2. Who are not eligible to get the vaccine?

✗ Person(s) with a history of severe allergic reaction to any vaccine, including AstraZeneca's Covishield® vaccine and Pfizer's COMINARTY® vaccines.



Who should postpone the vaccination?

- Person(s) who received any vaccine(s) within the last 2 weeks
- Current COVID-19 positive patient
- Person(s) who is currently sick/hospitalized
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women, EXCEPT pregnant and breastfeeding women who are frontline workers and pregnant and breastfeeding women with comorbidities.



Who needs to be vaccinated in the hospital setting?

- Person(s) with a past history of severe allergies to any medicine or food.



Vaccination Roll Out Plan

- All population 15 years and above will be notified to register online. Those who are not able to register online will be facilitated by the Prime Minister's Office and the respective Local Government office.
- Pre-vaccination screening will be carried out after the registration using the Vaccine App and also on the day of vaccination by the Health Workers.
- Eligible registered population will be informed about the date and place of vaccination in all the 20 Dzongkhags.



Answers to Common Questions Regarding COVID-19 Vaccines



1. What are the benefits of the vaccine?

- The vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19.
- Even if you get sick from COVID-19, the vaccine will prevent you from getting seriously sick and from hospitalization.
- Vaccination is an important measure to stop the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Can vaccination prevent further transmission of COVID-19 infection?

- The vaccination alone is not enough. We must continue Our Gyenku of practicing preventive measures such as hand washing, cough etiquette, face masks, and physical distancing until the pandemic is no longer a public health threat.

3. Why are we vaccinating the whole eligible population?

- To protect the population from sickness and death by vaccinating every eligible person in the country.
- To achieve "Herd Immunity", also known as "Population Immunity" against COVID-19 infection; thereby, preventing further spread and making our communities safe again.

4. Is it compulsory to get vaccinated?

- Considering the benefits of the vaccine, MoH strongly recommends everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated.

5. Where can I get vaccinated?

- Individuals will be notified on the place and date of vaccination well in advance.

6. Do I have a choice of vaccine?

- MoH will decide on the type of COVID-19 vaccine depending on the availability and eligibility criteria.

7. Do I have to pay for the vaccine?

- No, the vaccine will be provided free of cost by the Royal Government of Bhutan.

8. What are the side effects of the vaccine?

- Serious side effects from COVID-19 vaccines are very rare. However, like most other vaccines, some persons may experience mild side effects such as a lump, tenderness, pain, warmth, swelling, bruising and rashes around injection site; fatigue, muscle and joint pains, fever, chills, headache, nausea, and vomiting.
- Anyone who experiences the above side effects should contact the nearest health center for advice and management or call the health hotlines (2121/6060/112).

9. Why are children below 18 years not vaccinated?

- The vaccine's (Covishield®) safety and efficacy in the population group below 18 years old is yet to be established.

10. Is it necessary to get the second dose of the vaccine?

- Yes, it is important to get the second dose to ensure maximum protection from the vaccine.

11. What is the duration between the first dose and second dose?

- The recommended duration is 8 to 12 weeks for AstraZeneca's Covishield® vaccine and 4 weeks for Pfizer's COMINARTY® vaccine.

12. Can we acquire protection right after we get vaccinated?

- No, generally, it takes at least 2 weeks after the second dose to get the most desirable level of protection from the vaccine.

FOR MORE INFORMATION :

HOTLINES
2121
6060

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