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<b>To:</b>	General Practices, Pharmacists, After-Hours Centres and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions
<b>From:</b>	Dr Stephen Palmer, Medical Officer of Health
<b>Date:</b>	1 September 2021
<b>Title:</b>	National Public Health Advice: Ministry of Health-IMAC advice - Myocarditis and the COVID-19 vaccine

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Please distribute the following information to relevant staff in your organisation.

All public health alerts are available at [www.rph.org.nz/publichealthalerts](http://www.rph.org.nz/publichealthalerts)

## Ministry of Health-IMAC advice - Myocarditis and the COVID-19 vaccine

Please see the following information from the Ministry of Health and IMAC in order to ensure everyone is fully aware of the symptoms and signs of o/pericarditis in the days following COVID-19 vaccination.

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Kia ora koutou

Today the Ministry of Health issued a [press release](#) regarding the death of a woman in the days following vaccination with the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. The Ministry of Health states the case has been referred to the Coroner and the cause of death has not yet been determined.

The COVID-19 Vaccine Independent Safety Monitoring Board (CV-ISMB) considered that the myocarditis was probably due to vaccination. The CV-ISMB noted that there were other medical issues occurring at the same time which may have influenced the outcome following vaccination.

# PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

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## Key points for vaccinators and other health professionals

- A risk of **heart inflammation** (myocarditis, pericarditis, or both) has been observed in people who have received mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in overseas studies, particularly in males under 30 years of age after the second vaccine dose.
- IMAC emphasises that **the overwhelming benefits of vaccination in protecting against COVID-19 greatly outweigh the rare risk of these conditions**, and Comirnaty (Pfizer mRNA vaccine) used in New Zealand continues to be recommended for all people  $\geq 12$  years of age who do not have any contraindications to the vaccine.
- **Myocarditis symptoms** such as chest pain, shortness of breath or feelings of having a fast-beating fluttering, or pounding heart may appear within a few days of having the vaccine. Anyone who experiences these symptoms after having the vaccine should seek medical attention.
- Myocarditis or pericarditis reports have been **more common following the second dose and in younger males**.
- **The risk of myocarditis from COVID-19 infection is much greater than from COVID-19 vaccination:** Recent data from Israel showed three cases of myocarditis per 100,000 following Comirnaty vaccination versus 11 per 100,000 with COVID-19 infection.
- Most myocarditis and pericarditis cases linked to mRNA vaccination have required hospitalisation for assessment and monitoring but **most cases have been mild and patients have recovered quickly with standard treatment**. Longer-term follow-up of these cases is ongoing. However, sudden death may be a complication of myocarditis so careful assessment and management of suspected cases is important.

**All episodes of myocarditis and pericarditis following Comirnaty should be [notified to CARM](#).**

More information about myocarditis and the COVID-19 vaccine in New Zealand is [available on our website](#).

For further advice or support please call **0800 immune** or [0800immune@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:0800immune@auckland.ac.nz).

Ngā mihi,

**The Immunisation Advisory Centre**