



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
HON MARK BROWN  
GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS

COVID-19 VACCINE SOON TO BE AVAILABLE FOR 12-15 YEAR OLDS

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Cabinet has approved the COVID-19 vaccine to be given to the country's 12 to 15 year olds. Prime Minister Mark Brown says, "We want our children to be as well protected as they can be against this virus; in the same way that the overwhelming majority of our adult population has been protected."

"Reports from overseas show that young people are contracting this coronavirus in the same way as other sections of the population, and now that international health agencies like Medsafe in New Zealand have determined that it is safe to vaccinate 12 to 15 year olds, we are taking this step. The more people we have vaccinated the less chance the virus has to spread and cause serious illness and death."

"I cannot stress enough how important it is that all our eligible residents make use of this vaccine. It is free. It is effective. It will save lives. It may save your child's life. There is no doubting this fact."

The vaccination rollout is expected to start in October once vaccine supplies from New Zealand arrive. Young people on Rarotonga and Aitutaki are being done first to ensure they are protected should the borders open up again shortly. Vaccinating young people in the Pa Enea will follow. It is estimated we have about 1200 young people aged 12 to 15.

Meanwhile about 200 people who didn't get fully vaccinated in the early rollout, appear to have had second thoughts. About 100 now want the vaccine; and a further 103 who had their first vaccine but not the second, would now like to complete the process. These people will also have access to the vaccine in October.

The Secretary of Health – Bob Williams – says, "We are happy that these people have now come forward. The more complete our vaccine programme is, the safer our population, country and families will be, from this virus, which has already infected over 20-million worldwide."

Further details on the timing and logistics for this latest vaccine rollout, the vaccination process and other pertinent information will be provided by Te Marae Ora over the coming days and will also be available on the TMO website at [www.health.gov.ck/covid19/](http://www.health.gov.ck/covid19/)

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