Post Vaccine Symptom Check interim* report: 2024 influenza vaccine survey

Date: 15 August 2024

***Results presented on this interim report are not final. Additional data is still being collected that may impact the results when they are finalised.**

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora and Medsafe advises people not to make any decisions about vaccination based solely on the information contained in this report. If you have questions or concerns about receiving a vaccine, please speak to a health care professional.

Introduction

The information from the Post Vaccine Symptom Check (PVSC) survey supports ongoing safety monitoring of the influenza vaccine used in Aotearoa New Zealand.

On 1 April 2024, the annual influenza vaccine winter rollout began. In 2024, there are five options available for the influenza vaccine in Aotearoa New Zealand but only one is publicly funded (Influvac Tetra). Therefore, the majority of the results in this report are likely to be related to the funded vaccine. For the purposes of this report, we are not able to differentiate between which influenza vaccine was administered. The information provided below is by individuals who received the influenza vaccine only and excludes individuals who received another vaccination at the same appointment.

The influenza vaccine PVSC campaign began on 5 April 2024. From 5 April 2024 through 31 July 2024, text messages were sent to consumers asking if they had experienced any reactions within the 3 days following their vaccination. The data in this report contains information only from participants who completed the online day 3 survey.

PVSC survey answers come from one person. However, that person may report more than one reaction. As with any reaction following vaccination, some may be associated with the vaccine or they may be coincidental and due to other reasons. Survey responses are not validated by a medical professional and are self-reported, therefore we are unable to verify the responses.

Based on data collected from the 2024 influenza PVSC campaign, we have not identified any new safety concerns for the 2024 influenza vaccines. Collected data is in line with results from clinical trials and post-marketing surveillance in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas.

Survey results

Participants in the survey who indicated that they did not experience a reaction, between vaccination and completing the survey, were given a shortened version of the survey. Those that indicated they did experience a reaction within this time, or were unsure, were given the full survey with all of the questions.

Of the 24,727 participants who completed the day 3 survey, 87% did not experience a reaction following the influenza vaccination, 13% reported at least one reaction, and <1% were unsure (Table 1). All participants were asked to rate their overall vaccination experience from excellent to very poor. The vast majority (96%) indicated that they had an excellent or good experience (Figure 1).

Of the 24,727 participants, six (0.02%) people indicated that they experienced an anaphylactic reaction, five (0.02%) people reported experiencing a seizure or convulsion, and 28 (0.11%) people indicated that they had fainted after their vaccination.

Participants that indicated they experienced a reaction were given a pre-defined list of 12 reactions to select from. The five most frequently reported reactions on this list were: fatigue, injection site reaction, aches and pains, headaches, and dizziness (Figure 2). Participants were also asked to describe the severity of each reaction (Figure 3). The majority of people that experienced these reactions reported them being mild to moderate on a 5-point scale.

Participants who were given the full survey were also asked if they missed daily activities or sought medical advice. Of those who answered these questions (3,277), approximately 24% of participants reported missing daily activities or work. Additionally, 4% of the day 3 full survey participants indicated seeking medical advice (Figure 4). This could include seeking care from a GP clinic, phone advice from a helpline (e.g., Healthline), visiting a hospital emergency department, rongoā clinic, Whānau Ora navigator, or a Marae.

PVSC surveys do not specifically ask for the reason why a person sought medical care in the days following vaccination. Therefore, medical attendance reported may or may not be related to any reported reactions.

Table 1: Day 3 survey responses for those who did or did not experience a reaction following influenza vaccination, 5 April 2024 through 31 July 2024

Experienced reaction	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Did not experience a reaction	21,500	87%
Reported experiencing at least one reaction	3,145	13%
Unsure	82	<1%
Total	24,727	100%

Figure 1: Day 3 survey participants rating of vaccination experience, 24,727 total survey responses, 5 April 2024 through 31 July 2024

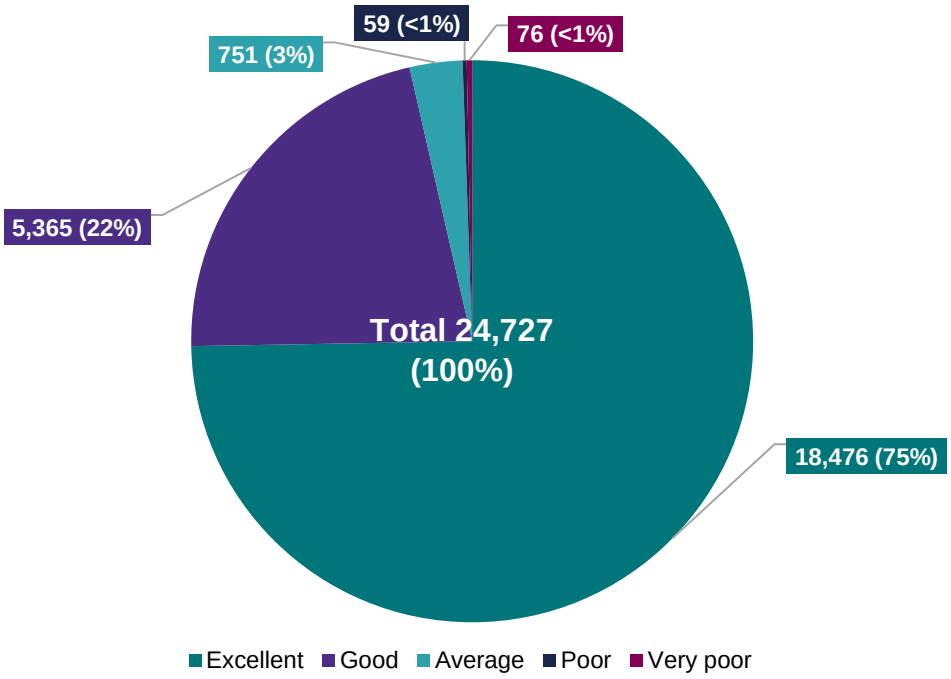


Figure 2: Day 3 survey most frequently reported reactions following influenza vaccination among a pre-defined list of 12 reactions, 24,727 total survey responses, 5 April 2024 through 31 July 2024

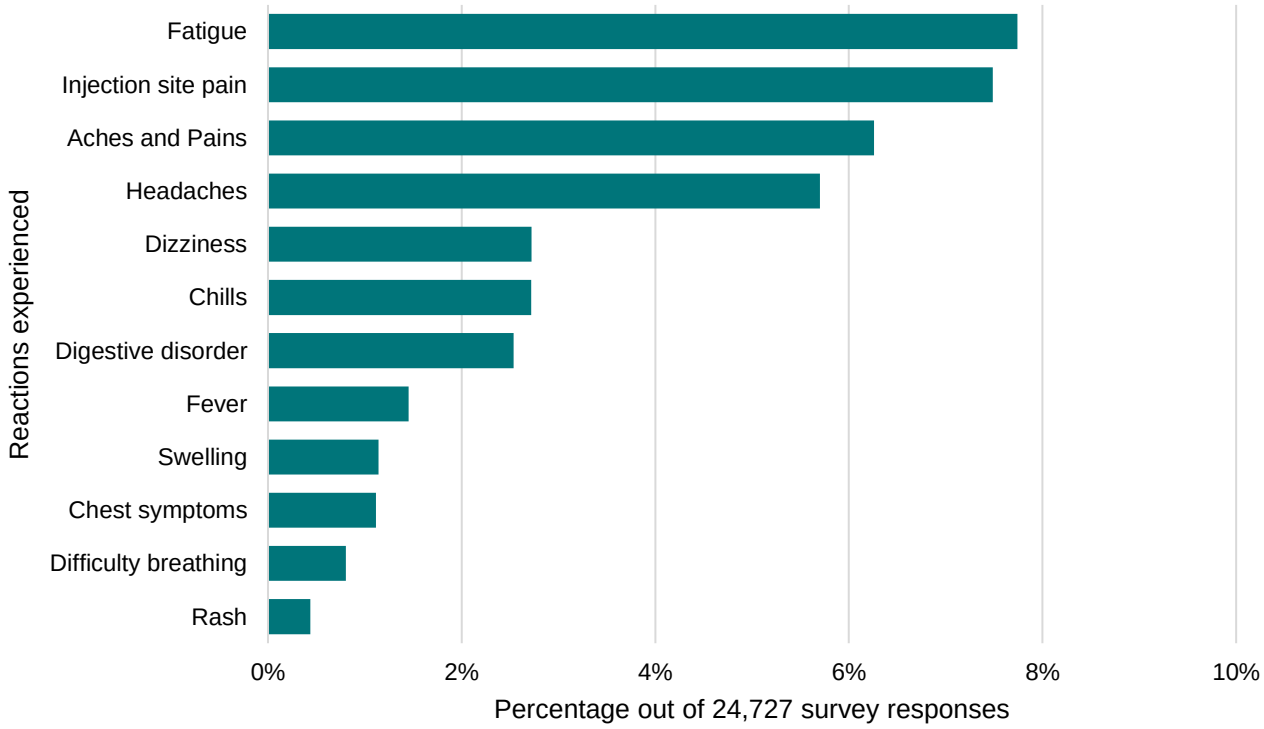
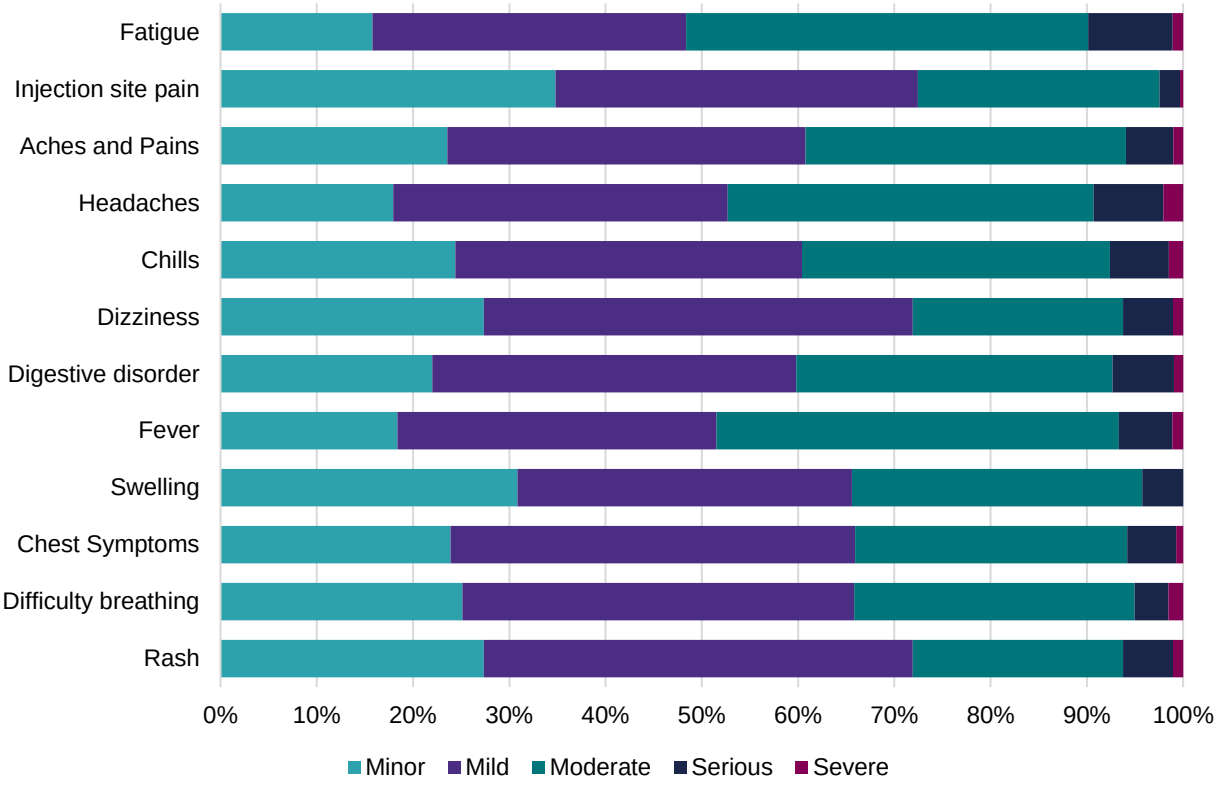


Figure 3: Day 3 survey participant severity reports for reactions following influenza vaccination, 5 April 2024 through 31 July 2024



Note: If a participant indicated they experienced a reaction, answering the severity question was required. The total for each reaction can be calculated using values from Table 1 and Figure 2

Figure 4: Day 3 survey participants who answered all survey questions (3,277), who indicated seeking medical advice, or missing activity following influenza vaccination, 5 April through 31 July 2024