

Why vaccines are essential to stop the spread of COVID-19

From [Department of Health](#)

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On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic. COVID-19 is impacting economies and societies all over the world. The measures in place in Ireland are part of our ongoing collective effort to reduce the spread of the virus here. This has been essential for our health. But it has also limited our ability to live our lives as we normally would.

To date over 55 million people have been infected with COVID-19 worldwide. There have been over 76,000 cases in Ireland.

[Get the latest updates on COVID-19 in Ireland.](#)

Experience of COVID-19 varies from person-to-person. Some people experience very mild symptoms and may not even realise that they have COVID-19. Other people will become very ill and experience severe symptoms. This can lead to hospitalisation or a stay in an intensive care unit (ICU). Sadly, some people die from COVID-19 infection.

COVID-19 can have a devastating impact, especially on people who are the most vulnerable to the disease. This includes people who are over 70 years of age and people with underlying health conditions. For others who have experienced a milder form of the illness, we do not yet know what the long-term impact of the virus could be.

Widespread distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine will build up the levels of immunity against COVID-19 in the general population. It will reduce the chances of you and your family getting the virus.