



What happens after I am vaccinated?

Does the vaccine have any side-effects?

After getting vaccinated, you may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects usually last a day or two after getting the vaccine.

The most common side effects include tenderness at the injection site, headache, fever, fatigue, chills or diarrhoea. These side effects range from mild to moderate, and may feel similar to a flu-like illness for a couple of days.

Most people feel fine after their vaccination!

If I start to worry about my side effects, when should I seek medical attention?

In most cases, discomfort from pain or fever is a normal sign that your body is building protection.

The NICD recommends that you contact your doctor or healthcare provider:

- If the redness or tenderness where you got the injection gets worse after 24 hours
- If your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days

Remember you can always call Dr M and her team at CareWorks if you have any questions or concerns!

Is it safe to exercise after I get my jab?

There is no evidence that it is dangerous to exercise after having your vaccine. The rule of thumb is listen to your body! If you don't feel well enough to exercise after your jab, have a rest day.

How long does protection from the COVID-19 vaccine last?

There is reason to believe that protection from COVID-19 vaccines will last at least longer than six months. While we don't know exactly how long protection lasts for those who are vaccinated, what we do know is that COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for a lot of people. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a wise choice.

Internationally, people are already getting 'booster' shots of COVID-19 vaccine, which will increase the length of time that they are protected against serious illness and death.

What are my social responsibilities?

Are we forced to take the vaccine? What will happen to those who don't want the vaccine?

At this stage, President Ramaphosa has announced that vaccination is not compulsory in terms of SA regulations.

Employers, however, are required to determine if they will enforce a mandatory vaccination policy for their workplace. If you have any questions about your workplace's policy and plans relating to vaccination, we encourage you to speak to your line manager about your Employer's plans for vaccination at work.

Do I still have to wear a mask once I'm vaccinated?

The vaccine will keep you safer, but you still need to play your part in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Although your vaccination should protect you from severe illness and death from COVID-19, you still have a duty to protect other people. You must continue to wear a mask, make sure rooms are well ventilated, avoid large indoor gatherings, and wash your hands regularly.

WE MUST USE ALL THE TOOLS WE HAVE TO INCREASE OUR CHANCES OF BEATING COVID-19:



Get vaccinated



Wear a mask



Keep spaces well-ventilated



Maintain social distancing



Wash hands regularly

your COVID-19 vaccine questions answered

We can beat COVID-19 if we all act together. Dr M and her team at CareWorks are here to help you with support and advice. Some of your most commonly asked questions are answered in the following pages. Our contact centre is waiting to assist you with any other questions or issues.

Vaccines are our best hope for ending the pandemic. If you are 18 years or older, there are five ways to register to get your vaccine:



Visit vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za



WhatsApp REGISTER to 0600 123 456



Dial *134*832# from any SA mobile network for free



Call 0860 142 142 between 8AM and 8PM on weekdays



In person by visiting a vaccination site



Our trained counsellors and healthcare professionals are waiting to assist you on 0800 24 36 72

The contact centre is available on weekdays between 8AM and 5PM and on weekends between 8AM and 1PM.

You can also contact us via WhatsApp on 082 735 4472



Are the vaccines safe?

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Yes! All vaccines have to pass strict clinical tests before they are approved for use. The new COVID-19 vaccines were studied in multiple clinical trials all around the world, each of which included thousands of individuals, before they were approved for use.

Since the vaccines received approval, millions of people around the world have been safely vaccinated.

Rumours that you can get COVID from the vaccine are false: no vaccine used in South Africa is made with live COVID-19 virus, so they can't infect you with the COVID-19 virus.

While you may have a sore arm, fatigue, headache, and even low-grade fever that lasts one or two days after your vaccination, this is to be expected and indicates that the vaccine is working.

Do the vaccines work?

Yes! Vaccines currently approved for use in South Africa prevent severe disease, hospitalisation and death.

And as being vaccinated may also help reduce the spread of the virus between people, your choice to get vaccinated could save many more lives.

You may have side effects after vaccination, but these are normal. It typically takes two weeks after you are fully vaccinated for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19.

Vaccines are our best hope for ending the pandemic.

If I've already had COVID-19, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. You should be vaccinated regardless of whether or not you have already had COVID-19. The best protection is seen in people who have recovered from COVID and been vaccinated.

Can I choose which vaccine I want?

The National Health Department distributes one vaccine type to each vaccination site, which is given to everyone who goes to that site for the jab. If you live in an urban area, you are more likely to get the Pfizer vaccine.

How do the vaccines work?

What is the difference between an mRNA vaccine and the non-mRNA vaccines?

All vaccines work by exposing the body to molecules from the target pathogen to trigger an immune response – but the method of exposure varies.

Traditional vaccines use whole viruses, which have been weakened or disabled, to trigger an immune response, like the measles and hepatitis A vaccines. The mRNA vaccines use a different method: pieces of genetic material (mRNA) are taken from the virus and provided to our cells with the instructions to trigger an immune response.

Here is an excellent article explaining how the different vaccines work:

www.yalemedicine.org/news/covid-19-vaccine-comparison

What causes virus mutations?

Quite simply: evolution and the need to survive. The more we build defenses against the virus, the more it needs to find different ways to continue spreading.

During reproduction, mutations in the virus occur. Some of these mutations are able to better overcome our defenses. By replicating these mutations, the virus develops into a new, often stronger, strain.

This article explains viral replication in Influenza and HIV: www.historyofvaccines.org/content/articles/viruses-and-evolution.

This article looks at COVID variants specifically: www.prevention.com/health/a35266961/what-is-covid-19-variant/

Do the current vaccines protect against all the virus mutations?

The available vaccines in South Africa offer protection against the variants seen in South Africa, including the Delta variant.

We cannot determine protection against future variants that are not yet in existence:

1. It is impossible to test against something that does not yet exist
2. Changes to the virus are not predictable

How do other illnesses affect the vaccine?

If I'm currently sick, should I have the vaccine?

No. It is not advisable to vaccinate people who are sick with COVID-19 or any other short-term illness, like Flu or other viral fevers. It is better to wait until you are fully recovered.

Is it safe to have the vaccine if you are taking chronic medication?

Yes. The vaccines do not interfere with drugs that are taken to control blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, lung disease, or other chronic health conditions. COVID-19 vaccines only affect the immune system, which has no impact on the effectiveness of medications to manage chronic conditions.

If you are on a particular drug that you are worried about, talk to your doctor.

Is the vaccine safe if I suffer from allergies?

It depends on the cause of your allergic reaction. A food allergy may not necessarily mean you cannot be vaccinated for COVID-19. If, however, you are allergic to other vaccines it is important to know as it may be a reason not to get the COVID-19 vaccine (vaccines can have common ingredients that cause allergic reactions). You should discuss this with your doctor and alert the vaccinator.

If I get the Flu vaccine, do I still need the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Flu and COVID-19 viruses are not part of the same virus family. While the symptoms may be similar, their origins are different. The flu vaccination will not protect you against COVID-19. Only vaccines created for COVID-19, will be effective at protecting individuals from COVID-19.

The flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine should be given at least 14 days apart. It is recommended to prioritise the COVID-19 vaccine.

What is the difference between COVID and flu?

Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses.

COVID-19 is caused by infection with a coronavirus first identified in 2019, and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses.

How will the vaccine affect my family?

Is there a connection between the vaccines and infertility?

There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines reduce fertility. Thousands of pregnant women around the world have already received the COVID-19 vaccine, and no significant side-effects have been reported. There is, however, evidence that there is an increased risk of death in pregnant women who get COVID, and an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, like preterm labour.

Should I continue breastfeeding after I have my vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future. Breastfeeding is rarely a safety concern with vaccines.

It is not yet clear whether COVID-19 vaccines can be excreted through breastfeeding. To determine the best course of action, the developmental and health benefits of breastfeeding should be considered along with the mother's clinical need for vaccination against COVID-19. The World Health Organisation (WHO) does not recommend mothers stop breastfeeding after their vaccinations.

Why are we seeing an increase in cases of younger children getting COVID-19?

We are seeing COVID infections across the age spectrums, and the increase in child infections probably has more to do with the transmissibility of this particular strain.

The majority of deaths is still in those over 60 with comorbidities.

Must we have the two-jab Pfizer vaccine if we want to travel?

Most countries now require proof of vaccination from people wishing to visit them. As yet there is no specification regarding the number of shots required.

You can check your destinations vaccination requirements here: apply.joinsherpa.com/map