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**COVID-19 VACCINATION ROLL OUT IN THE BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

[**What is Vaccination?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/vaccines-and-immunization-what-is-vaccination)

Vaccination is a simple, safe, and effective way to protect people against harmful diseases, before they come into contact with them. It uses your body’s natural defences to build resistance to specific infections and makes your immune system stronger.

**How do vaccines work?**

Vaccines trigger/ induce your immune system to create antibodies to fight an infection, just as it does when it is exposed to a disease. When you get a vaccine, your immune system responds. It:

* recognises the invading germ, such as the virus or bacteria
* produces antibodies. Antibodies are proteins produced naturally by the immune system to fight diseases
* remembers the disease and how to fight it. If you are then exposed to the germ in the future, your immune system can quickly destroy it before you become unwell.

However, because vaccines contain only inactive or weakened parts of germs like viruses or bacteria, they do not cause a disease or put you at risk of its complications.

**Who is getting vaccinated for COVID-19 in the Basic Education Sector?**

The Basic Education Sector vaccination roll-out programme is targeting ALL Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff at Public and Private Schools regardless of age.

**How do I get registered to access the COVID-19 vaccine under the Basic Education Sector vaccination roll-out campaign?**

All Teachers and Non-Teaching staff on PERSAL have been pre-loaded on to the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) - a National Department of Health database. Data of SGB-employed teachers as well as teachers in the independent schools sector has been pre-loaded on to the EVDS as well.

**What documents am I expected to take with me to the vaccination site?**

DBE staff are required to take along their national Identification (ID) as well as their Medical Aid Card (for those on medical aid).

**Why is my medical aid details required at vaccination site?**

Getting vaccinated is covered by all Medical Aid Schemes under the Minimum Prescribed Benefits package. For South Africans with medical aid, the cost of the vaccination will be covered through their medical aid. For those that do not have medical aid, the cost of the vaccination will be covered by the Government.

**Will I be penalised for not taking the vaccine?**

No. Taking the COVID-19 vaccine is voluntary and there is no penalty for anyone who refuses to take the vaccine.

**What are the risks if I don’t take the vaccine?**

The risk is that you will not be protected and those around you (especially those that are not eligible to take the vaccines including very young babies, those who are seriously ill or have certain allergies) will not be protected against vaccine-preventable diseases. At the country level, we will not be able to reach population immunity which protects all of us from spreading the COVID-19 virus as we need to vaccinate 67% of South Africans to get everyone protected.

**Will transport be provided to vaccination sites?**

All Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff should arrange their own transport to get to the vaccination sites.

**Should I be vaccinated after taking the flu vaccine?**

You should not get a COVID-19 vaccine and a flu vaccine at the same time. COVID-19 vaccines should be given alone with at least 14 days either before or after you get any other vaccines, including a flu vaccine. This is because there is currently limited information on the safety and effectiveness of getting other vaccines at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine.

As more information becomes available, this recommendation may change. Your healthcare provider can help you decide the best vaccination schedule for you and your family.

**Will I not get infected with Covid after vaccination?**

Yes. You can still get infected with COVID-19 after getting vaccinated. Studies have proven that the vaccine protects against severe illness and death. It does not protect against mild to moderate illness.

[**How many people will be vaccinated for COVID-19 in the Basic Education Sector?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/vaccines-and-immunization-what-is-vaccination)

The Basic Education Sector vaccination roll-out plan intends to vaccinate everyone eligible to receive the vaccine. As a start, the number to be vaccinated will depend on the number of doses that are made available to the sector. At the moment, 300,000 Johnson and Johnson vaccine have arrived in the country, and all these will be allocated to DBE. The country expects to receive another consignment from Johnson and Johnson by end of next week and these will enable the DBE sector to expand from the 300,000 to all eligible and willing DBE sector staff regardless of age.

**Will I be required to get a second or a booster dose after I get vaccinated?**

The Johnson and Johnson vaccine requires only a single dose for a person to get fully vaccinated. At this point, you will not be required to get a second or booster dose.

**When will the Basic Education Sector vaccination roll out campaign start and how long will it last?**

The Basic Education Sector vaccination roll-out campaign will commence on 23rd June 2021 and will be implemented over a period of just over two weeks (including weekends). The campaign will end on the 8th of July 2021.

[**Why should I get vaccinated for COVID-19?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/vaccines-and-immunization-what-is-vaccination)

Two key reasons to get vaccinated for COVID-19 are:

* To protect ourselves; and
* To protect those around us, because not everyone can be vaccinated – including very young babies, those who are seriously ill or have certain allergies – they depend on others being vaccinated to ensure they are also safe from vaccine-preventable diseases.

**[Do I need to continue wearing a mask after I get vaccinated?](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-vaccines)**

Yes. It is important to continue practising COVID-19 safety protocols. You must continue to wear a mask, wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds or sanitize, and maintain a social distance of at least 1.5 meters from others.

**Can I choose which vaccine to get at the vaccination site?**

The current available vaccines available to the Basic Education Sector for roll-out is the Johnson and Johnson vaccines. These require only a single dose and after that one dose, you will be considered fully vaccinated. You do not need a second dose of Johnson and Johnson or any other vaccine.

[**If I am pregnant, can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-vaccines)

Yes, you can still receive the Johnson and Johnson vaccine even when you are pregnant.

**How will the vaccines be allocated to different Provinces and Districts?**

Once the Johnson and Johnson vaccines have passed the mandatory testing from SAHPRA, the vaccines will be distributed to the provinces, then to districts. The allocation to each province and district is based on the number of Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff in the DBE database in a specific province and district.

**What happens if a Basic Education staff member misses the window to get vaccinated over the 2-week period?**

The Basic Education Sector’s vaccination roll-out programme is meant to accelerate access to the Teachers and Non-Teaching staff as part of essential workers. This does not mean that staff cannot access the COVID-19 vaccine from the normal national roll out programme. A staff member who misses the window to get vaccinated during the DBE vaccination campaign period can still get vaccinated through the national COVID-19 roll-out campaign but will have to follow the guidelines from the

National Department of Health with regard to eligibility.

**I recently recovered from COVID-19, should I still take the vaccine?**

Yes, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. That’s because experts do not yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. Even if you have already recovered from COVID-19, it is possible - although rare - that you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 again. Studies have shown that vaccination provides a strong boost in protection in people who have recovered from COVID-19. The only requirement is that a person who tested positive for COVID-19 should wait at least 30 days before taking the COVID-19 vaccine.

**How long does protection from a COVID-19 vaccine last?**

We still don’t know 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. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to your loved ones who may get very sick. Experts are working to learn more about both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity. As we get more information from health experts through the National Department of Health, we will keep the public informed. In the meantime, getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice.

**I will be the only one in my family to get vaccinated, how do I get other family members vaccinated?**

The Basic Education Sector vaccination roll-out campaign is meant to help schools to re-open safely later in July of 2021. If your family members are eligible for the Phase 2 of the national vaccination roll-out campaign, please encourage them to register on EVDS (the electronic database of the National Department of Health). You can find out more information for your family members on the day you get your vaccine.

**I hear that some people get side effects after they get vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine. Is this normal?**

Yes, some people that receive the COVID-19 experience side effects. These are generally mild to moderate and they are a result of your immune system instructing your body to react in a certain way as a means of protection.

**What are the most common side effects following vaccination with COVID-19?**

The most common side effects reported to date include:

* Pain, swelling or redness where the vaccine was injected.
* Mild fever
* Chills
* Feeling tired
* Headache and joint aches

**What would be the severe side effects to watch out for?**

Severe side effects are very rare, in fact one is more likely to be struck by lightening than get these symptoms. The most severe side effects are:

* Difficulty breathing.
* Swelling of the face and throat
* A fast heartbeat
* A bad rash all over the body
* Dizziness and feeling general weakness

**Should I seek medical attention when I experience side effects following vaccination for COVID-19?**

In most cases, the experience of the common side effects indicated above does not require medical attention as these go away by themselves within a short period of time. However, in the rare occasion that you experience any of the severe symptoms mentioned above or any of the common symptom continues for more than 3 days after vaccination, contact your doctor or health care provider immediately.

**Where can I get more information about COVID-19 vaccines?**

For more information visit [www.sacoronavirus.co.za](http://www.sacoronavirus.co.za) or [www.health.gov.za](http://www.health.gov.za) or [www.nicd.ac.za](http://www.nicd.ac.za)

Or call the COVID-19 Hotline at 0800 029 999