COVID-19 VACCINATION FACT SHEET

There is a lot of scientific evidence that the vaccination protects us against the coronavirus. Being vaccinated can save many of us from becoming very sick with the disease.

General information

What is a vaccine? A vaccine is used to train your immune system to be able to deal with an infection and fight it off in the future.

What is herd/population? Herd or population immunity is achieved when many people are vaccinated, and an infection struggles to find someone who can get sick. When a disease can spread very quickly, more people need to be vaccinated to make herd immunity possible.

Is there a vaccine for COVID-19? Yes. In South Africa, the first two vaccines that will be available are the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. Other vaccines may also be used as more results become available. All vaccines have been thoroughly tested for safety.

About the vaccine

How will the vaccine be given? You'd get an injection in your upper arm. Some vaccines need two doses at least three to four weeks apart for the best protection (e.g. one injection in September and another one in October). The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is given in one dose only.

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe? All COVID-19 vaccines being used have been tested many times to ensure safety and were specially created to check for any common side effects and safety concerns, including the dominant COVID-19 variant in South Africa, called 501Y. V2. These tests involved people at high risk of COVID-19, but the vaccine hasn't been tested enough to ensure safety in pregnant women and children. More studies are being done to find out if the vaccines are safe for pregnant women and children.

What are the side effects? Side effects are pain and redness in the upper arm where you're injected, headache, and feeling unwell, tired, and feverish. This just means that your body is being prepared to fight the virus in future. These side effects are usually worse after 1 day and gone within 4-5 days. You can use paracetamol or an anti-inflammatory if you need to.

How was the vaccine made so quickly? Experience with the SARS and MERS outbreaks (both caused by coronaviruses), faster manufacturing, funding for multiple trials and regulators moving quicker than before made the process much faster. No corners have been cut, and the trials that test safety and efficacy are as rigorous as they have been for others before.

Western Cape Government

Health

STAY SAFE
MOVE FORWARD

What to expect

When is it my turn to get the COVID-19 vaccine? Vaccinations will happen in three phases, starting with people most at risk of COVID-19 because of their job, age or health.

Phase 1:	will focus on frontline health care workers.
Phase 2:	will focus on essential workers, people in group settings, people over 60 and people over 18 with certain underlying medical conditions.
Phase 3:	will focus on people older than 18.

Do I need the vaccine if I've already had COVID-19? Yes, you should still be vaccinated if you've already had COVID-19 or if you've had a positive antibody test. So far, we know that the natural immunity from having COVID-19 may not last. The vaccination will boost any response your immune system put in place after a previous coronavirus infection.

Can I get the vaccine if I have symptoms of COVID-19 or if I am in quarantine? If you are in quarantine after being exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should wait until you've finished your quarantine period before getting vaccinated. If you have COVID-19, you should wait until you've finished your isolation period before getting vaccinated. If you have COVID-19 symptoms on the day of your vaccination, you'll be referred for a COVID-19 test and your vaccination will be rescheduled.

Is it safe to get a vaccine if I have an underlying medical condition? If you're an adult with an underlying medical condition or illness, you have a greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Because of this, you should consider getting vaccinated. Most people with an underlying health condition can get the vaccine, but your doctor or the person vaccinating you will tell you if there are any concerns before getting the vaccine.

What can I do now to help protect myself from getting COVID-19 until I am able to get vaccinated? Continue wearing your mask, practising social distancing, and sanitising/washing your hands and frequently touched objects regularly, before and even after getting vaccinated. We don't know whether the vaccine stops transmission yet, so it's important to stay safe and follow these good hygiene rules even after you're vaccinated.

How to beat your fears

Will the vaccine change my DNA? No, the vaccine won't work on your DNA. Vaccines are made in different ways, but no vaccines have any direct impact on your DNA.

Is there a microchip in the vaccine? No, there is no microchips or trackers in any of the vaccines. Getting vaccinated doesn't mean that you will be tracked or that any of your personal information will be stolen.

I'm not sure if I should get vaccinated. Do I really need to? Uncertainty and doubts about the vaccine will impact all of us. If too few of us choose to get vaccinated, more people get sick. If more of us get vaccinated, fewer people get sick. You can do research by following trustworthy sources or the official Western Cape Government Facebook page or website for reasons for and information about the vaccines.

Remember: Whether you are a health care worker or a member of the general public, it is your decision to get vaccinated or not. Your choice will be respected.

Western Cape Government
Health

STAY SAFE
MOVE FORWARD