



# ANC Covid Vaccines Awareness Campaign

Issued by | **ANC Luthuli House**  
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## **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 train your immune system to create antibodies, 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 disease
- 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 killed or weakened forms of germs like viruses or bacteria, they do not cause the disease or put you at risk of its complications.

## **How are vaccines given to people?**

Most vaccines are given by an injection, but some are given orally (by mouth) or sprayed into the nose.

## **Why is vaccination important?**

Vaccination is a safe and effective way to prevent disease and save lives. When we get vaccinated, we do not just protect ourselves, but also those around us. Some people, like those who are seriously ill, are advised not to get certain vaccines – so they depend on the rest of us to get vaccinated and help reduce the spread of disease.

## **What is “herd immunity”?**

When a person gets vaccinated against a disease, their risk of infection is also reduced – so they are far less likely to spread the disease to others. As more people in a community get vaccinated, fewer people remain vulnerable, and there is less possibility for passing the germ on from person to person. Lowering the possibility for a germ to circulate in the community protects those who cannot be vaccinated due to other serious health conditions from the disease targeted by the vaccine. This is called “herd immunity.”

“Herd immunity” exists when a high percentage of the population is vaccinated, making it difficult for infectious diseases to spread, because there are not many people who can be infected. But herd immunity only works if most people are vaccinated.

## **Why should I get vaccinated?**

Two key reasons to get vaccinated 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.

## **Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?**

Yes. There are COVID-19 vaccines that certain countries’ regulatory authorities have approved for them to use and many more COVID-19 vaccines that are currently being developed. Once vaccines are demonstrated to be safe and effective, they must be approved by national regulators, manufactured to exacting standards, and distributed. The World Health Organization (WHO) is working with partners around the world to help ensure equal access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines for the billions of people who will need them.

## **What must happen before COVID-19 vaccines can be delivered to countries around the world?**

Before COVID-19 vaccines can be delivered:

- the vaccines must be proven safe and effective in large clinical trials
- a series of independent reviews of the efficacy and safety evidence must be done, including regulatory review and approval in the country where the vaccine is manufactured, before WHO considers a vaccine product
- in addition to review of the data for regulatory purposes, the evidence must also be reviewed for the purpose of policy recommendations on how the vaccines should be used
- an external panel of experts convened by WHO, called the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE), analyses the results from clinical trials, along with evidence on the disease, age groups affected, risk factors for disease, and other information. The panel then recommends whether and how the vaccines should be used
- officials in individual countries decide whether to approve the vaccines for use in their country and develop policies for how to use the vaccines based on the WHO recommendations
- the vaccines must be manufactured in large quantities, which is a major and unprecedented challenge – all the while continuing to produce all the other important life-saving vaccines already in use
- as a final step, all approved vaccines will require distribution through a complex logistical process, with rigorous stock management and temperature control

### **How quickly could COVID-19 vaccines stop the pandemic?**

The impact of COVID-19 vaccines on the pandemic will depend on several factors. These include factors such as the effectiveness of the vaccines; how quickly they are approved, manufactured, and delivered; and how many people get vaccinated.

Most scientists anticipate that, like most other vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines will not be 100 per cent effective. The WHO is working to help ensure that any approved vaccines are as effective as possible, so they can have the greatest impact on the pandemic.

### **Will COVID-19 vaccines provide long-term protection?**

It is too early to know if COVID-19 vaccines will provide long-term protection. Additional research is needed to answer this question. However, it is encouraging that available data suggest that most people who recover from COVID-19 develop an immune response that provides at least some period of protection against reinfection – although we are still learning how strong this protection is, and how long it lasts.

Most COVID-19 vaccines being tested or reviewed now will need two doses.

### **Which Vaccines is South Africa currently using in its vaccination program?**

There are two types of vaccines which South Africa is currently using for the vaccination program namely Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. Currently, the former needs two doses and the latter only one dose.

## **What else is South Africa doing to get vaccines?**

In addition to the Pfizer and J&J, South Africa is also part of the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team that is looking at alternative financing mechanisms to secure additional vaccines for African countries.

There are two other vaccines that have been approved by SAHPRA namely Sinovac, from China and AstraZeneca. South Africa is now engaged in the acquisition process to ensure that we add more vaccines to our program.

## **How will South Africa make sure that the vaccines we use are safe?**

The Department of Health will work with the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to ensure that whichever vaccine being recommended or made available has met all the regulatory requires of safety, efficacy, and quality.

## **Vaccine safety is a priority**

Our rollout strategy includes testing each vaccine. We thank the efforts of our scientists in working with government to ensure the safety of all vaccines.

## **How safe are these vaccines?**

Vaccines undergo rigorous testing for safety and efficacy, based on trial data from thousands of participants across the globe. Several national and international regulatory agencies have closely examined the COVID-19 vaccines for safety and effectiveness.

In South Africa we have an additional layer of safety. The SA Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) looks at all the scientific data to ensure the vaccine is safe, effective, and a quality product.

Additionally because COVID-19 vaccines were developed speedily, all regulators globally have put extra mechanisms in place to monitor them.

### **Who can be vaccinated?**

South Africans of the ages above 35 are currently being vaccinated and from 01 September 2021 we will start vaccinating South Africans of ages above 18. This is in addition to all Health care workers, social development workers, educators, security cluster in government which includes the SAPS, Traffic officers in all spheres of government, Military personnel, etc.

### **When will South Africa reach herd immunisation?**

By December 2021 South Africa plans to vaccinate 70% of the population which will help us to break covid-19 transmission. Our current rate of vaccination will help us to reach this target and once it is reached we will fast approach herd immunisation.



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