



## SA COVID-19 VACCINE STRATEGY & ROLLOUT KEY MESSAGES

### ***Access to COVID-19 vaccines is our highest priority.***

- South Africa will receive 1 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in January and 500 000 doses in February of the Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine from the Serum Institute of India (SII).
- We will begin by vaccinating our country's estimated 1.25 million healthcare workers.
- Government is working closely with South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to ensure there is no delay approving the vaccine for use.
- The Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine has already been approved by various regulators around the world and is being rolled out in other countries.
- We have also reached an agreement with the COVAX Facility to secure vaccines to immunise 10 per cent of the population.
- These doses are expected at the beginning of second quarter of the year.
- We continue to work with various pharmaceuticals companies ensure we immunise 67 per cent of the population by the end 2021.

### ***There will be a phased rollout of the vaccine.***

- There has been no deliberate delay to access the COVID-19 vaccine, as the situation remains fluid; all factors have to be taken into account.
- We are selecting vaccines on their safety and efficacy, ease of use, storage, distribution, supply sustainability and cost.
- Our rollout of the vaccine will take a three-phase approach that begins with the most vulnerable in our population.
- Our target is to vaccinate 67 per cent of the population by the end of 2021, which will allow us to achieve herd immunity.
- Phase 1 will focus on frontline healthcare workers.

- Phase 2 will see us vaccinate essential workers, persons in congregate settings, persons over 60 years and persons over 18 years with co-morbidities.
- Phase 3 will focus on persons older than 18 years, targeting 22 500 000 of the population.

***Government will source, distribute and oversee the rollout of the vaccine.***

- Government as the sole purchaser of vaccines will distribute it to provincial governments and the private sector.
- We will procure available stocks from different manufacturers.
- There will therefore be multiple vaccines in our programme, but you cannot be vaccinated with two different vaccines.
- The vaccination system will be based on a pre-vaccination registration and appointment system.
- All those vaccinated will be placed on a national register and provided with a vaccination card.
- A national rollout committee will oversee the vaccine implementation in both the public and private sectors.

***Vaccines save lives!***

- There is overwhelming scientific evidence that vaccination is the best defence against serious infections.
- Vaccines do not give you the virus, rather it teaches your immune system to recognise and fight the infection.
- The COVID-19 vaccine presents the body with instructions to build immunity and does not alter human cells.
- Vaccines have reduced the morbidity and mortality of infectious diseases such as smallpox, poliomyelitis, hepatitis B, measles, tetanus, whooping cough and pneumococcal conjugate across the world.
- Vaccinating enough people would help create herd immunity and stamp out the disease.

***Vaccines undergo rigorous trials to ensure they are safe and effective.***

- All vaccines go through a comprehensive approval process by medical regulators to ensure that they are safe.
- Pharmaceutical companies hand over all laboratory studies and safety trials to validate that the vaccine does work.
- Any safety concerns are picked up by regulators when reviewing the data.
- Vaccines are made to save lives not to oppress, bewitch, possess or indoctrinate people.

***The COVID-19 vaccine is a public good.***

- The National Treasury is committed to ensure that funding is not a constraint to accessing vaccines.
- Detailed budgetary allocations to procure COVID-19 vaccines will be announced in the 2021 National Budget. This is over and above funding arrangements that are being made in the current financial year for the purchase of the first order of vaccines, aimed initially at frontline workers.
- Overall, funding will come from additional budgets, reprioritisation, revenue increases and potentially from partnerships with the private sector.
- Government has signed a binding financial commitment for the future payments of 85 per cent of the total cost, approximately R2.2 billion, to the COVAX Facility. Other arrangements are being discussed bilaterally with different vaccine manufacturers.
- The Solidarity Fund has generously made a donation to cover the upfront payment of approximately 15 per cent of the total cost.

***We are working in partnership to secure the COVID-19 vaccine.***

- The government will be able to procure the vaccine from the fiscus.
- Business and medical aid schemes have come forward to support government's efforts and this is welcomed. This collaboration will be guided by the tenets of social solidarity and zero tolerance for corruption
- The Department of Health has signed amendments of regulations to allow for vaccines and other therapeutics to be part of the medical schemes' prescribed minimum benefit.

Further information can be found on <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/category/mac-advisories/>.