

May 2021

Dear Member,

The Mass COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign started on Monday 17 May and we would like to share the latest vaccine developments so that you can know what to expect during this critical time in our nation right now.

Moving into this phase of the COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign marks a significant turning point in the fight against COVID-19 in South Africa. It will result in thousands of lives being saved and is critical to building the economy. The faster we can roll out the vaccines, the quicker we can realise these benefits. We all need to choose vaccination. This is a key lesson we have learned globally: herd immunity is critical to our collective wellbeing.

During this phase, the following vulnerable groups will be vaccinated between now and the end of July 2021:

- healthcare workers that were not vaccinated during the J&J Sisonke Trial which concluded on 15 May;
- those over 60 years of age; and
- those living in congregate settings, for example retirement villages and nursing homes.

Having our healthcare workers vaccinated is crucial considering that they are at considerably greater risk of infection and are vital to the security of our health system during this pandemic. The phase will commence with the vaccination of the approximately 700,000 healthcare workers not yet vaccinated.

If you are over 60 years of age, register for the vaccine on the Department of Health's EVDS (hyperlink: <https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za/#/>). Based on your registration details, EVDS will issue you with your unique token when it is your turn to be vaccinated. Without this token, you won't be eligible for vaccination. **You can also register by dialling *134*832# or WhatsApp the word REGISTER to 0600 123456.**

The over 60s who have registered on EVDS will start receiving SMS's outlining their scheduled vaccination day, time, and site (near their home or work) over the next few days. Remember, there are still over 700,000 healthcare workers who need to be vaccinated as the priority, so the scale up will be gradual over the next one to two weeks. **Please do not go to a site before you are invited to do so via SMS.**

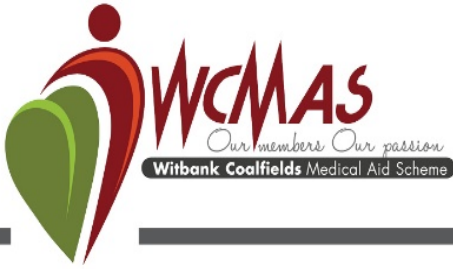
If you are younger than 60 years of age, assist those in your community to register as per above; and await further communication on your specific eligibility.


Given the rollout is the largest operation our country has ever implemented, we appeal to you to be tolerant of initial teething issues and supportive as the operational rollout is streamlined and it reaches full scale.

The country has secured enough vaccines to vaccinate 42 million people. There are currently 87 approved vaccination sites to which vaccines are being delivered. This will scale up over the next two weeks, with the intention to expand to 3,000 vaccination sites at the peak of rollout during July and August. Sufficient stock has been procured to deliver 6.5 million doses to people by the end of June and for the vaccination of 42 million people by the end of the year.

Vaccination is free at the vaccination site for every South African resident. For medical scheme members, the cost of vaccines and vaccination will be funded by their medical scheme, with no impact to your medical savings accounts and available benefits.

Recent weeks has seen surges of infections in several provinces with health officials cautioning the onset of a third wave. The highest exposure for disease transmission is indoors, in crowded places, and poorly ventilated areas.



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 Witbank Coalfields Medical Aid Scheme

This is a significant risk as we move into winter when people prefer to huddle indoors. The best way to mitigate this risk is to opt for outdoor gatherings; keep windows and doors open when indoors; ensure socially-distanced get togethers; and particularly, to wear a mask at all times. **The risk of a third wave developing is high. If we remain vigilant and achieve widespread vaccination, many deaths can be averted.**

We urge you to please continue to do your part in the fight against COVID-19 and remain committed to supporting our members during this time.

Sincerely,

WCMAS