

Mass Covid-19 vaccine rollout launches, as third wave looms

The next phase of South Africa's Covid-19 vaccine programme rolls out today, as the rates of infection in parts of the country start to rapidly climb.



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The next stage comprises Phase 1B, which targets health workers not covered in the Sisonke study and Phase 2, aimed at people over 60.

The Department of Health says that 478,452 healthcare workers have been vaccinated have been inoculated, and that number will increase in the new phase, while Phase 2 will add another 16.5-million South Africans to the vaccine roster.

The number of vaccination sites across the country has increased significantly from 92 to around 3,000 – including private health facilities

The vaccine roster has also been expanded to include South Africans over 60 and over 18s with co-morbidities; those generally considered most vulnerable to the disease.

“ For tomorrow we will not be able to accommodate walk-ins, going forward, we will be able to do so. The programme has been designed to avoid long queues. This is why it is important that people should register beforehand, and follow the instructions which they receive by SMS.— Department of Health (@HealthZA) [May 16, 2021](#) ”

In addition, anyone who is eligible to receive a Covid-19 vaccine in this phase are urged to register on the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS)

“ Citizens aged 60 years and above need to register for their Covid-19 vaccination through the EVDS self-enrollment platform. Here is a simple guide on the process to follow: pic.twitter.com/RSEynWf1G— Department of Health (@HealthZA) [May 16, 2021](#) ”

Once registered, people who meet the criteria will be assigned a vaccination date and site to visit where they will either

receive the once-off Johnson and Johnson jab – or the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine with another to be taken a fortnight later.

Although the country is not officially in a third wave, there is a concerning upsurge in the infections. The department said last week that Covid-19 infections had climbed 46%, especially in the Northern Cape and Gauteng provinces, although deaths rose 18% in the week, the number of hospitalisations has not increased.

The reasons for the increase include a drop in vigilance in non-pharmaceutical interventions, such as mask wearing and social distancing, and the arrival of more aggressive strains.

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