

## Newsletter 1 June 2021

### Vaccination

On the 28th February, I was grateful to receive the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine. I had minimal side effects: a sore arm at the injection site for three days and a severe headache in the middle of the night which resolved within 15 minutes after taking two Panado. My staff were also fortunate enough to be vaccinated and had fewer side effects than I had. This does not mean that we can't get COVID-19. It means that we have a 67% chance of protection against moderate-severe disease, 85% against severe Covid-19 and almost 100% chance of protection against death. (Figures from the Ensemble Study). We still need to wear masks, socially distance and wash our hands.

**Vaccine roll-out Phase 1:** As part of the Sisonke trial, health care workers received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine from the 20 February.

The Sisonke trial was temporarily suspended following some reported blood clots noted in 6 individuals from 6 million people vaccinated in the USA. These blood clots were not formed in the same way as usual clots, but by a rare immune-mediated syndrome.

To give some perspective on this; the risk of developing a blood clot after

- the J&J vaccine is 0.0001%
- taking birth control pills is between 0.05 - 0.12%
- smoking is 0.18%
- getting a COVID-19 infection is 16.5%

There are more complications from having a COVID-19 infection than there are from having the vaccine.

Women under the age of 50 do have an increased risk of getting Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) or Vaccine Induced Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia (VITT) so could opt to rather choose the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

**Phase 2:** The Department of Health vaccine roll-out Phase 2 began on the 17 May with the Pfizer vaccine being given to those over the age of 60. This will be followed by those aged 50 and older, and 40 and older. The Pfizer vaccine requires a booster vaccine 42 days after the first dose. 20 million doses (enough for 10 million people) will be distributed. In addition, 31 million doses of the J&J (enough for 31 million people) will be distributed under the tradename Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine.

**Phase 3** will focus on people older than 18, and those who were not vaccinated in phases 1 or 2.

### How to register:

- Those of you who are 60 or older, and choose to have the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine, must please register on the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) website: <https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za>. You will then be sent a confirmatory sms with a date, place and time for your vaccine.
- Alternatively, send the word **REGISTER to 0600 123456** on What's App (data & internet access required).
- Another option is to Dial **\*134\*832\*ID NUMBER#**

Should you encounter problems with the registration process contact the **COVID hotline 0800 029 999**

Premier Alan Winde has launched the campaign "6 minutes for the 60+", which is encouraging the younger generation who are more tech savvy to spend 6 minutes helping someone over the age of 60 to get registered. This is a great initiative, and should be encouraged.

### **Should I have a COVID-19 vaccine if I have had COVID?**

Everyone should be vaccinated. If you had a mild COVID infection, please wait 1 month before having a COVID vaccine. If you had a severe COVID infection, please wait 90 days before being vaccinated. This reduces the possibility of adverse reactions to the vaccine.

### **I have had a flu vaccine, when is it safe to have the COVID vaccine?**

It is safe to have the COVID vaccination 14 days after receiving the seasonal Influenza vaccine.

### **How long after receiving the COVID vaccine can I get the Influenza vaccine?**

You need to wait 1 month after the COVID vaccine before getting the Influenza vaccine

### **What is contained in the vaccine?**

All COVID vaccines contain instructions for your immune system to respond to the spike protein on the coronavirus. The vaccine naturally disintegrates within days. It contains no animal products or eggs, is suitable for vegans and is halal.

The outcome of a Covid-19 infection is unpredictable and can be devastating, so I encourage you all to make every effort to get vaccinated. 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. For more vaccine information, go to trustworthy sources or the official Western Cape Government Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WesternCapeGovernment>

Keep safe

Yours in health

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted.

Dr Louise Wiggins