



26 May 2021

Dear Doctor

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS UPDATE – YOU CAN STILL BE VACCINATED!

It has been a remarkable few months for all healthcare workers as we became the first South Africans to receive the vaccine. Approaching the end of the Sisonke Trial we had a strong upsurge in the adoption of the vaccines, with healthcare workers coming from all sides to make sure they took up the opportunity. In the last few days, there were record number of vaccinations being performed – an encouraging sight. Nearly 480 000 individuals in the healthcare industry received their vaccines, and we trust that this will stand us in good stead as we begin to tackle the third COVID-19 wave.

In South Africa, Mediclinic now has about 8 500 vaccinated staff, as well as about 2 500 associated doctors and professionals, 2200 MHR staff members and more than 520 ER24 colleagues. What a remarkable achievement! Our colleagues in Namibia are currently in the process of receiving vaccines and we are excited for each of them to take up the opportunity.

But for those health care workers who were unable to take up the opportunity within the Sisonke Trial, there is still the opportunity as a healthcare worker to receive a vaccine as part of the healthcare worker 'mop up' phase within the next few weeks. We would urge all staff and other health care workers not to delay their vaccinations any further once vaccines are available for your facility.

Those who have not yet received their vaccine, will receive these via our own facilities in coming weeks. This will either be the Pfizer vaccine (two dose) or the J&J vaccine (single dose), depending on what is distributed to the site closest to you. Please note that the Sisonke voucher is no longer valid, so you have already been issued with a new vaccine code from the EVDS system for the new phase of the roll-out at the vaccination site. This is visible on the EVDS system by the site supervisor or administrator. This mop-up will be done in parallel with the public vaccination of over 60s. The

Vaccines for Health Care Workers website will again be used to assist healthcare workers with appointments at vaccination sites. Those healthcare workers in a Mediclinic facility, may be assisted directly by that facility.

Healthcare workers not previously on the EVDS will still get the opportunity to register, but the process around that still needs to be finalised by the DoH.

We recognise that the steps we take now will have a significant impact on what we experience during any upcoming waves. The vaccine is our best shot at avoiding serious illness or death, and we rely on our community to follow our example in receiving the vaccine. Please make every effort to convey this positive message to those who you engage with.

You will note that we now will have public vaccination centres at many of our facilities. Our community will be engaging with us through these points, hoping to follow our example. We planned to start at the following ten sites using the Pfizer vaccine in the week of 24 May, however, the start date has been delayed due to vaccine supply constraints:

- Mediclinic Morningside
- Mediclinic Medforum
- Mediclinic Bloemfontein
- Mediclinic Pietermaritzburg
- Mediclinic Geneva
- Mediclinic Gariep
- Mediclinic Cape Gate
- Mediclinic Vergelegen
- Mediclinic Milnerton
- Mediclinic Panorama

We eventually plan to vaccinate at 43 Mediclinic facilities as soon as more vaccines becomes available.

Some facilities have received queries on the need for measures such as masking and screening once healthcare practitioners and patients have received the vaccine. We would like to provide some additional research below to substantiate our current protocols. This will be updated as new information becomes available.

Vaccination effectiveness

A vaccine's effectiveness is determined during a clinical trial setting in which some participants are given the vaccine and some a placebo. They then measure the outcome of the vaccine in preventing moderate to severe COVID-19 infection or death. In a study published on the 21st April 2021, the J&J vaccine was found to be 67% effective against preventing moderate/severe COVID infections and 100% against death.

This means that for every time a vaccinated individual is exposed to COVID-19, he has a 67% less chance than a non-vaccinated person of contracting COVID. This [site](#) offers a valuable video clip of how the effectiveness is calculated.

There is therefore a 33% chance that a vaccinated person can get infected but then the disease should be mild or moderate as vaccines are designed to protect 100% from severe infections and death.

Vaccines do not need to have high effectiveness to save thousands of lives and prevent millions of disease cases. The popular flu shot, for example, has an effectiveness of 40–60% (Trusted Source, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).) However, during 2018–2019, it prevented around “4.4 million influenza illnesses, 2.3 million influenza-associated medical visits, 58,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations, and 3,500 influenza-associated deaths.” [LINK](#)

Vaccines and immunity

It takes some time for the vaccine to induce the body's immune response. In that time, you are still susceptible to getting a COVID-19 infection as your body hasn't developed the necessary immunity to protect it fully yet.

A study published in April 2021 showed that for people vaccinated with the J&J Vaccine, 90% have the necessary Neutralizing-antibodies on day 29 reaching 100% by day 57. This means that at least until 28 days after vaccination, you must still protect yourself from getting an infection using masks, social distancing and avoiding gatherings in order to give your body's immune system a chance to develop a strong antibody response. [LINK](#)

Given the information above, Mediclinic, therefore requires that all healthcare workers and patients, vaccinated or not, be screened at access control as they may still have an infection, which could potentially be spread to our patients, other healthcare workers and staff.

Thank you once again for your valuable input and dedication to providing care and support during the pandemic. Your contribution is appreciated by all.

Kind regards



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