

# BONITAS COVID-19 VACCINE FAQs

2021



With the first phase of vaccinations in full swing, and more vaccines entering the country, there are still many questions around the COVID-19 vaccine. In this document we try to answer some of the most frequently asked questions around the funding, process, and clinical use of the vaccine.

These FAQs have been formed based on information from the National Department of Health (NDoH), funding guidelines from the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS), the South African Vaccine Partnership, and AfroCentric's vaccine rollout strategy.

## SECTION 1: FUNDING QUESTIONS

### 1 WILL BONITAS PAY FOR THE VACCINE?

Yes. The vaccines will form part of the Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PMBs) and will be funded as per the PMB Guidelines and Scheme Rules. This means that you will not incur any costs for the COVID-19 vaccination for you and your registered dependants.

### 2 WILL BONITAS PAY FOR THE VACCINATION IF A MEMBER TRAVELS TO A DIFFERENT COUNTRY TO BE VACCINATED?

Members are encouraged to purchase travel insurance prior to foreign travel. However, should the active member wish to, he/she may submit their foreign claim to Bonitas and include the required documentation as stipulated on the below process for processing.

- Claims will be funded as a foreign claim by the Scheme.
- The member needs to pay the claims upfront from their own pocket and claim back from the Scheme.
- The member should send us a valid invoice and proof of payment. The claims must be submitted to us within 4 months of the service date.
- All foreign claims will be reimbursed in South African Rand, and according to the registered Scheme rules.

You can now submit your claims to [claims@bonitas.co.za](mailto:claims@bonitas.co.za).

Medical claims outside the 90 days or any medical claims that would not be covered by Europe Assistance, do not qualify

### 3 FROM WHAT BENEFIT WILL THE VACCINE BE PAID FROM?

The vaccines will form part of the Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PMB's) and will therefore pay from Risk/ Overall Annual Limits benefits. The vaccine will not be paid from your available day to day and/ or savings benefits.

### 4 HOW WILL BONITAS PAY SHOULD THERE BE COMPLICATIONS RESULTING FROM THE VACCINE?

Bonitas will pay for any complications in line with the scheme rules and benefits as well as PMB legislation.

### 5 WILL BONITAS SUBSIDISE NON-MEDICAL AID MEMBERS TOWARDS THE VACCINE?

No. Schemes are legally not allowed to pay benefits to persons not covered on the Scheme.

### 6 HOW MUCH DOES THE VACCINE COST?

The final price for the vaccines have not yet been released, but is currently estimated between R144 and R238 per vaccine, inclusive of vaccine administration.

## SECTION 2: PROCESS QUESTIONS

### 7 WILL I BE ABLE TO GET THE VACCINE AND HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

Yes. Everyone over the age of 18 will be prioritised for vaccination in line with the South African COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout Plan.

Persons will have to be registered on the national Electronic Vaccination Data System and the process will be communicated as soon as it is finalised by the NDoH.



### 8 FROM WHERE CAN I GET THE VACCINE?

The process has not yet been finalised, but planning is underway for the vaccines to be available via work-based vaccination programmes, accredited pharmacy and doctor networks as well as from NDoH accredited vaccination centres. These details will be made available once received.

### 9 WHEN WILL THE VACCINE BE AVAILABLE?

Phase 1 vaccination of frontline healthcare workers is currently underway. The official dates for Phase 2 and Phase 3 have not yet been confirmed, but will be communicated as soon as it is made available by the NDoH.

### 10 WILL THE SCHEME ADVISE MEMBERS WHEN AND WHERE THE VACCINES WILL BE AVAILABLE?

Yes. Updates will be provided on a regular basis and once the process has been finalised with the National Department of Health (NDoH) it will be communicated to all members.

### 11 WILL I BE FORCED TO TAKE THE VACCINE?

No person will be forced to take the vaccination. As per his national address dated 01 February 2021, President Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed that no individual will be forced to take the vaccine. Condition of employment may however require employees to vaccinate in order to return to work in order to not pose an increased health risk to other employees.



### **12 WILL THE VACCINE BE AVAILABLE TO THE ELDERLY?**

Yes, the vaccine will be available to the elderly in Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout plan.

### **13 WILL THE ELDERLY RECEIVE PREFERENCE?**

Yes, persons over the age of 60 will be prioritised in Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout plan.

### **14 WILL BENEFICIARIES WITH CO-MORBIDITIES RECEIVE PREFERENCE?**

Yes, persons over the age of 18 with co-morbidities will be prioritised in Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout plan.

### **15 IS THERE A LIST FOR WHO CAN GET THE VACCINE AND WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS PHASES?**

A three-phased approach has been adopted to ensure that there are sufficient vaccines at any given time to meet the demand. It is important to remember that information for each phase of the administration of the vaccine will be communicated, as the vaccines and processes are implemented.

**Phase 1** will allow healthcare workers to get the vaccine. It is crucial that they are vaccinated as they care for us when we get sick.

**Phase 2** has been broken down into four (4) groups of people:

- Essential workers: This included people who are required to work to keep our country and the economy running and includes (but is not limited to) police, teachers, municipal employees, security employees, farmers and food shop employees.
- People who are over the age of sixty (60) years.
- People who work and live in places which are densely populated, i.e. prisons, old age homes, care homes and institutions such as universities and churches.
- People over eighteen (18) years of age who present with comorbidities.

**Phase 3** includes the rest of the country.

### **16 WHAT IS THE ROLL-OUT PLAN FOR THE VACCINE?**

The roll-out plan is currently under development and will be communicated once finalised. At this stage the NDoH will be the only buyer of the vaccine into the country which will be stored at a Central Distribution Warehouse. Both the private and public sector will source the vaccine from the Central Distributor for distribution to registered providers for administration.

### **17 WILL THERE BE A LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF VACCINES AVAILABLE?**

The South African government is working hard to ensure that we have enough vaccines available for the country. We will however not receive all the vaccines at the same time and therefore the vaccinations will be done over 3 phases.

## **SECTION 3: CLINICAL QUESTIONS**

### **18 FROM WHAT AGE CAN I RECEIVE THE VACCINE?**

Some vaccines are currently registered for use in persons 16 years and older while others are registered for persons 18 years and older as the vaccines were not tested on persons younger than this. The South African COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout Plan currently only allows for vaccination in persons 18 years and older. You should however always discuss this with your treating healthcare provider who will guide you.

### **19 HOW DOES THE VACCINE WORK?**

A vaccine works by helping the body recognise a new sickness, such as COVID-19, and then teaches the body how to fight it. When a person comes into contact with this sickness, their body is then ready to fight it and the person does not get sick.

### **20 CAN I USE THE VACCINE IF I HAVE A CHRONIC CONDITION?**

Yes. The vaccine can be used in most cases if you have a chronic condition and persons with co-morbidities will be prioritised in Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout. You will however be screened by your treating healthcare provider prior to receiving the vaccination to make sure that you are fit to do so.

### **21 WHAT SIDE-EFFECTS WILL THE VACCINE HAVE ON ME?**

Most people will have a sore and slightly swollen arm for a few days, but feel fine. Some people may have sore muscles, feel a little tired, have a headache, or may feel hot. These feelings mean that the vaccination is working, but they will go away in one or two days. You should however always discuss any side-effects with your treating healthcare provider who will guide you.

### **22 IS IT SAFE TO TAKE THE VACCINE?**

Yes. The vaccines that will be used in South Africa is safe. It has already been given to millions of people around the world, young and old, rich and poor. The vaccine has been developed and tested by leading scientists around the world, including South Africa. South Africa has some of the best doctors and nurses in the world. They will not allow us to use a vaccine that is not safe. Although it was developed very quickly to save lives, it has gone through all the necessary tests that other vaccines go through. It is however imperative that you discuss any conditions, including pregnancy or intention to fall pregnant with your healthcare provider so he/she may assess if the vaccine would still be safe for you to take.

### **23 I HAVE ALREADY HAD COVID-19, DO I STILL NEED THE VACCINE?**

Yes. Some people are getting COVID-19 for the second time. The vaccine will help to prevent you from getting sick again. You should however always discuss this with your treating healthcare provider who will guide you.

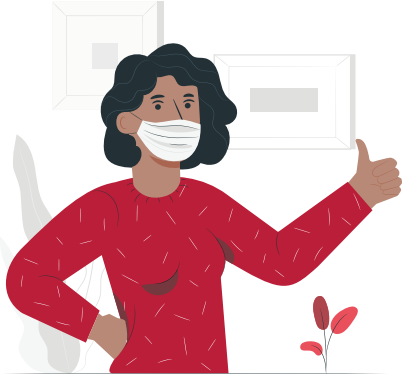
## 24 SHOULD I CONTINUE TO USE THE SAME PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AS I DID PRIOR TO THE VACCINATION?

Yes, you still need to practise social distancing, avoid crowds, sanitise/wash hands and wear a cloth mask.

## 25 IS THERE A THIRD WAVE COMING AND ARE WE GOING TO BE IMMUNE TO IT AFTER THE VACCINE?

Yes, analysts predict a third wave for South Africa around May 2021, although, it is anticipated to be less severe compared to the first and second waves. The vaccine will stop most people from getting sick with COVID-19. A small number of people might still get sick from COVID-19 even after they have been vaccinated. Without the vaccination they may however have gotten more sick. You should however always discuss this with your treating healthcare provider who will guide you.

## AND REMEMBER, WE ALL STILL NEED TO:



### WEAR A FACE MASK

A FACE MASK SHOULD BE WORN IN PUBLIC TO LIMIT FURTHER SPREAD OF THE VIRUS



### AVOID CLOSE CONTACT

WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK OR WHO SHOW SYMPTOMS OF THE VIRUS



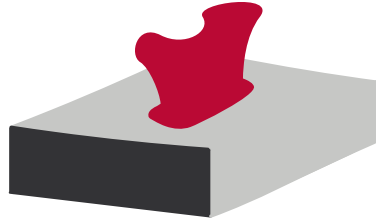
### WASH YOUR HANDS

OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER OR ALCOHOL-BASED SANITISER (60-85% ALCOHOL)



### AVOID TOUCHING

YOUR EYES, NOSE, AND MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS



### STAY AT HOME

WHEN YOU ARE SICK



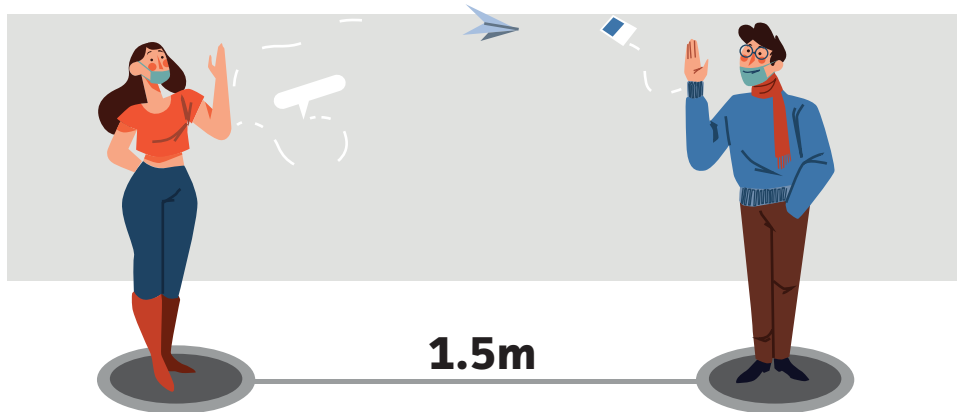
### PRACTICE COUGH ETIQUETTE,

COVERING YOUR COUGH OR SNEEZE



### CLEAN AND DISINFECT

FREQUENTLY TOUCHED OBJECTS AND SURFACES



1.5m

MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING