

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE #01

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap & water
- Keep at least 2 metres away from others
- STAY AT HOME
- Always wear a cloth mask when out in public



THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

After peaking during July/August of last year, the number of new infections in South Africa started to decline during the last quarter. At the beginning of December, however, this trend shifted back to a steep increase in new infections, and at present we continue to see a daily incline in reported cases.

A new variant of the virus was also recently discovered, and while research about this new strain is ongoing and not yet conclusive, it calls for added vigilance.

We are well and truly in the midst of a second wave.

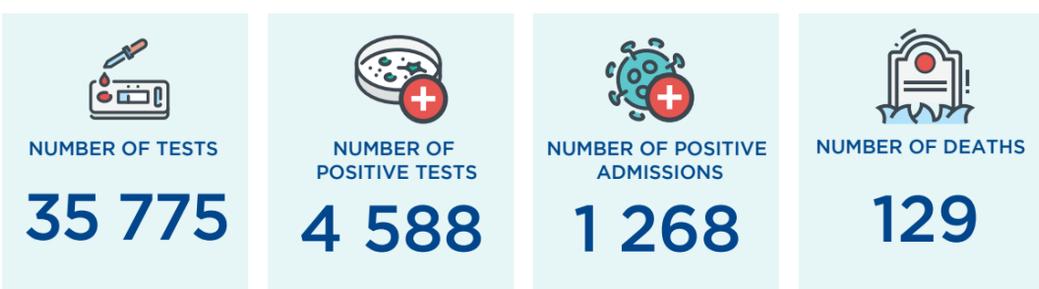
We thank our members for their compliance thus far. We also understand that by now, we all wish for the day when masks and lockdown restrictions can be put behind us, but the reality is that we are not there just yet. As such, we urge our members to remain as vigilant as ever with their precautions and safety measures.

As always, we will keep you updated of the latest news and information as it becomes available.



THE LATEST FEDHEALTH COVID-19 STATS

We share Fedhealth's latest COVID-19 statistics with you (as of 6 January 2021).



CO-MORBIDITIES OF MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN ADMITTED

	Hyper-tension	Diabetes	Chronic Renal Disease	Oncology	Obe-sity	Cardiac Disease	Asthma	COPD	TB	HIV
COVID-19 survivors	313	178	34	83	21	214	49	8	12	46
COVID-19 deaths	51	31	3	19	2	30	4	0	3	8
Total	364	209	37	102	23	244	53	8	15	54



FEDHEALTH'S STANCE ON THE COVID-19 VACCINATION

The possibility of a coronavirus vaccine becoming available soon is currently a hot topic. The South African authorities are participating in the WHO COVAX agreement, which aims to ensure that developing countries secure equal, or at least simultaneous, access to COVID-19 vaccines.

At present, Fedhealth has not been approached by our government to participate in any talks or negotiations. However, the Health Funders Association (HFA) as an Industry body represents us as one of their members.

What options to fund COVID-19 vaccines for members are Fedhealth considering?

Since our primary role remains the funding of medical services and medication, Fedhealth will ensure that all members and beneficiaries are covered for the vaccine once available.

It isn't easy to make an accurate projection of the actual cost at this early stage, due to various unknowns such as the type of vaccine that our government will approve. Still, we feel comfortable that Fedhealth will be able to cover the cost of the COVID-19 vaccine in 2021 from Risk for all our members, without impacting our 2021 financial budget.

Will Fedhealth members be able to access the vaccination this year?

At this stage, with so many unknown variables that are beyond our control and in the hands of government's participation in the WHO COVAX agreement, it's hard to predict exactly when Fedhealth will be able to procure vaccinations for its members.

Estimations for delivery of first vaccines to participants in the scheme is mid-2021. Fedhealth will then be subject to the roll-out plan recommended by the government. The hope is that all members will be able to get the vaccine before the end of 2021. From a scheme perspective, it will be important for us to prioritise higher-risk members with co-morbidities.

Will the scheme be obliged to also subsidise vaccinations for non-members?

You would have noticed in recent media reports that medical schemes may be required to also subsidise vaccines for non-members. Although the scheme does understand the importance of reaching at least 67% of the population in order to achieve herd immunity, no agreement has as yet been reached between government and medical schemes. The scheme is mindful of the fact that members' money is at stake and that our main obligation will always be with our own members first. The scheme, through the Health Funders Association, is currently in discussion with the Council for Medical Schemes and government to explore ways in which the objective of achieving herd immunity can be achieved through public-private co-operation without affecting the obligation of a medical scheme to its members. We will keep our members updated with developments in this regard.



PLEASE REMAIN SELECTIVE ABOUT ELECTIVE

When the coronavirus's severity first became apparent in 2020, we requested our members to delay elective (non-emergency) surgery until the worst of the outbreak was over. With the second wave now in full swing and ramping up, we must extend this request once again.

Why are we asking this of our members?

- We don't want to burden the healthcare system, because we need as many hospital beds as possible to be available for patients requiring hospitalisation in the case of COVID-19;
- Social distancing helps to slow down the spread of the virus. Avoiding hospitals is another way to protect yourself from possible exposure to the virus.

COVID-19 will remain with us for the foreseeable future, so ensuring the best healthcare quality for all our members will necessitate a collaborative effort between the scheme and you, our members. It comes down to this: We want the RIGHT care for the RIGHT member at the RIGHT time in the RIGHT facility.

- Do remember to make use of Fedhealth's rich screening benefits and health risk assessments to ensure that your health is on track.
- Always follow your doctor's advice. If you are unsure whether elective surgery can be postponed, ask them the following questions:
 - What are the risks of postponing the surgery?
 - Are there any non-surgical treatments available?
 - What precautions does the hospital taker to protect patients from COVID-19?
 - Does surgery have to be performed in an acute hospital... is a doctor's room or day-hospital perhaps an alternative?
 - What can you do before and after your surgery to protect yourself?

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

Fedhealth Customer Contact Centre: Monday to Thursday 08h30 - 17h00; Friday 09h00 - 17h00. Call 0860 002 153 or email member@fedhealth.co.za
Fedhealth Nurse Line and Emergency Medical Services: 0860 333 432
Paed-IQ: 0860 444 128 and **SOS Call Me:** *130*3272*31# Press 1. Emergency Medical Services; 2. Nurse Line; 3. MediTaxi Visit the **Coronavirus Hub on the Fedhealth website:** <https://fedhealth.co.za/media/2338/fedhealth-coronavirus-faqs-document.pdf> or use the **COVID-19 Chatbot** (go to LiveChat on fedhealth.co.za to select)



IMPORTANT COVID-19 RESOURCES

COVID-19 online resource and news portal: <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>
 The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD): <https://www.nicd.ac.za/>