FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON COVID-19 VACCINATION IN KENYA.

This section provides latest information and responses to questions from the public on COVID-19 vaccination in Kenya. The answers are aimed at providing the public with accurate, reliable and timely information on the ongoing COVID-19 Vaccination in Kenya. This document is regularly updated to reflect new developments and emerging issues.

For more information, call the Ministry's COVID-19 hotline number on 719.

Question	Answer
What does COVID-19 stand for?	COVID-19 stands for Coronavirus disease of 2019. It is the official name given by the World Health Organization (WHO) to the disease caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2. The novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 is a new coronavirus not previously seen in humans. This means it is different from the coronaviruses that cause the common cold and those that caused SARS in 2002 and MERS in 2012. The first cases of the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 were reported in December 2019. WHO officially named the disease COVID-19 in a press release issued on 11th February 2020.

Is COVID-19 the same as the common cold?	No. COVID-19 and common cold are not the same. COVID-19 is caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 not previously seen in humans. Colds and flus are caused by different types of viruses common to humans. Unlike the flu, COVID-19 can sometimes cause a person to suddenly lose their sense of smell or taste. The number of those who are likely to be severely ill or die as a result of contracting COVID-19 is up to 10 times higher for COVID-19 than for the common cold or flu.
Why is COVID-19 considered a pandemic?	On 11th March, 2020, the WHO officially classified COVID19 as a pandemic. A pandemic is the worldwide outbreak of a disease that quickly spreads across different countries and continents. The WHO made the decision to classify COVID-19 as a pandemic based on the following factors: • Within a period of just two weeks, the number of cases of COVID-19 outside China had increased 13-fold. • The number of affected countries had tripled. • There were more than 118,000 cases in 114 countries. • 4,291 people had lost their lives. • Thousands more were admitted in hospitals. COVID-19 is the first coronavirus to be classified as a pandemic. This is due to its high case fatality rate and rapid spread of the disease.

What is the plan for COVID-19 vaccination in Kenya?	The Government of Kenya is committed to fully vaccinating the entire population of adults (18 years and above) living in Kenya by June 2022. The COVID-19 vaccine is being deployed in 3 phases. The phases are not exclusive and may overlap. **Phase 1:** This kicked off in March 2021 and targeted those working in the 'frontline' of COVID-19 response. This included; healthcare workers; teaching and nonteaching staff in all educational institutions; uniformed Officers - Police, Military, Prison Officers; Immigration Officers; Instructors in Religious Institutions and people aged 58 years and above. **Phase 2:** This is ongoing and targets frontline workers and adults aged 18 years and above especially those with comorbidities. **Phase 3:** This will target all adults aged 18 years and above. **Those with underlying health conditions are highly encouraged to get vaccinated.**
When can I expect to receive my COVID-19 vaccine?	The Government of Kenya rolled out vaccination of the 1st dose of the AstraZeneca/Covishield vaccine in March 2021. The Government wants to ensure all persons who got the 1st dose get the 2nd dose in order to increase the number of fully vaccinated Kenyans in the country. The government has also opened up Covid 19 vaccination for those who want to get the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine and meet the eligibility criteria.

Where can I get accurate information on COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination in Kenya?	For accurate and reliable information on COVID-19 vaccines, please refer to the Ministry of Health website https://www.health.go.ke or call the Ministry's COVID-19 hotline number on 719 or dial *719#. You can also visit the World Health Organization (WHO) or UNICEF websites for accurate information on the vaccines and vaccination.
Which COVID-19 vaccines has the Ministry of Health approved for administration in Kenya?	Vaccination is a key strategy that has been identified as a preventive tool against the COVID-19 disease alongside other preventive measures. The World Health Organization has approved and recommended multiple vaccines against COVID - 19. The Ministry of Health authorized the use of **AstraZeneca/Covishield vaccines** in the country as an initial vaccine deployment plan. MOH has also approved the use of **Pfizer, Moderna, Sinopharm** and **Johnson & Johnson.**
How many doses of COVID 19 vaccine do I need to take and at what intervals?	The number of doses you receive depends on the type of Covid 19 vaccine that is administered. AstraZeneca/Covishield, Pfizer, Moderna and Sinopharm are two dose COVID-19 vaccines. This means you will need to take two doses at an interval of between 4 - 12 weeks as recommended by WHO to be fully vaccinated. The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine requires one dose for full protection.

What happens if I fail to take the second dose of COVID 19 vaccine on time?	It is recommended you take the two doses for maximum protection for the two dose vaccines. If for some reason you do not get your second dose within the recommended period, you are advised to visit your nearest health facility as soon as possible to get the second dose.
Why is COVID-19 vaccine needed when we have other public health preventative measures like physical distancing, wearing face masks and hand washing?	COVID-19 has no cure. Stopping the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic will require several measures which include Covid 19 vaccination. The vaccines work with your immune system and prepare it to fight the virus in case you get exposed. The Ministry of Health encourages the public to continue practicing preventative measures which include; • Sanitizing with an alcohol based sanitizer or washing your hands with soap frequently. • Wearing face masks while outdoors or in a crowded setting. • Maintaining physical distance (social distancing) of at least 1.5 meters away from others. Getting fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and adhering to the preventative measures provides the best protection for you and those around you.
How do COVID-19 vaccines work?	Vaccines prepare your immune system to recognize and fight off the virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccines are designed to teach the body's immune system to safely recognize and block the virus that causes COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccine uses a form of the virus that has been inactivated or weakened so it doesn't cause disease but still generates an immune response.

Are the COVID-19 Vaccines safe?	Yes. All authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. This follows rigorous and thorough scientific studies. For more information, please refer to the link below to the Ministry of Health website https://www.health.go.ke or call the Ministry's COVID-19 hotline number on 719 or dial *719#.
Who is eligible for the COVID 19 Vaccine?	All adults over the age of 18 years are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination. However, prioritization is being given to persons with pre-existing health conditions, frontline workers and the elderly.
Who is NOT eligible for COVID-19 vaccination?	The vaccine is currently **NOT** being given to; 1. Children 2. Anyone with allergies to the vaccine or a component of the vaccine 3. Anyone with flu/ COVID-19 symptoms at the time of presenting for vaccination. Pregnant women may be vaccinated on a case by case basis if assessed and found to be at high risk of severe COVID19 disease.

Does COVID-19 vaccination cause side effects?	Some COVID-19 vaccines have side effects which are normal signs that your body is building immune protection. Common side effects observed with the COVID-19 vaccines may include: pain and swelling on the arm where you receive the vaccine, fever, chills, tiredness and headache. The side effects should typically go away within a few days. The Ministry of Health confirms the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the possible risks. You can get more information on COVID 19 side effects on https://www.pharmacyboardkenya.org/blog/2021/03/pvers-ii-launch
Are Vaccines safe for people with chronic diseases and heart conditions?	Yes, patients with cardiac diseases or diabetes are among the priority groups to be vaccinated against COVID-19. All types of the COVID-19 vaccines are safe for them.
Has anyone died as a result of COVID-19 vaccination?	No. There are no reported deaths as a result of COVID-19 vaccination in Kenya. The Ministry of Health through the Pharmacy and Poisons Board collects daily data on all Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) that result from COVID-19 vaccination in Kenya. Should you have any information on AEFI as a result of COVID-19 vaccination in Kenya, please call the Ministry's COVID-19 hotline number on 719 or report online using https://pv.pharmacyboardkenya.org/padrs/add

Why do I need to get vaccinated against COVID-19?	COVID-19 Vaccination helps prevent severe illness and death caused by the disease. Other benefits include; **Protection to Yourself and the Community** • When you get vaccinated, you are protecting yourself and helping to protect the whole community. • COVID-19 can spread quickly and widely. It has resulted in the deaths of over 4.4 million people worldwide and over 4,000 deaths in Kenya. • When enough people in the community are vaccinated, it slows down the spread of the disease. **Reducing the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic** • Higher vaccination rates make outbreaks less likely. This in turn reduces the need for preventive measures, such as curfews, lockdowns, and movement restrictions. • As a result, vaccination saves both lives and livelihoods.
How do I decide which COVID-19 vaccine to take?	All authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and available free of charge. The Ministry of Health does not recommend one vaccine type over another. All vaccines offer maximum protection if all the recommended doses are administered. The most important decision is to get a COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible from the nearest vaccination facility. Widespread vaccination is a critical tool to help stop the pandemic.

Can I mix vaccines? If I got the first dose of AstraZeneca/covishield can I take a second dose of another type of vaccine?	The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued guidelines on mixing of vaccines in cases where COVID-19 vaccine supplies are not adequate. Currently in Kenya, mixing of COVID-19 vaccines has not been adopted as a policy. However, a review on the mixing of COVID-19 vaccines may be done and an update issued should the need arise.
Where can I get vaccinated against COVID-19 disease?	The Government of Kenya has taken positive steps to provide COVID-19 vaccines for all persons residing in Kenya, including refugees and migrants based on a policy of equal and equitable access. All vaccinations are to be administered at vaccination centers which are assigned by the Ministry of Health. The updated list of approved designated vaccination centers is available on the MoH website. https://www.health.go.ke or call the Ministry's COVID-19 hotline number on 719. **COVID-19 vaccination is free.**
Do I have to register to get vaccinated against COVID-19 disease?	Yes, registration or entry into the CHANJO electronic vaccination registry is a requirement for all those receiving their COVID-19 vaccination. This allows for effective monitoring of those who have received the vaccine and accurate issuance of Certificates for those fully vaccinated. Pre-register from the Ministry of Health website portal.health.go.ke

Can children get vaccinated against COVID-19 disease?	No. Currently, no one under the age of 18 years is eligible to receive the vaccine. Children tend not to develop severe symptoms due to COVID-19 disease. However, this may change as more data on the vaccines become available.
Can I stop adhering to all the COVID-19 preventative measures once I am fully vaccinated?	No, the Ministry of Health recommends that everyone – including those who have been fully vaccinated to continue using all available tools and preventive measures to help stop the spread of COVID-19, such as physical and social distancing, avoiding crowds, use of face masks and frequent hand washing with soap or use of an alcohol based hand sanitizer. This will provide the best possible protection against getting and spreading COVID-19 disease.
Can I get infected with COVID-19 disease even after vaccination?	Whilst the COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective, it does not give 100% protection and hence a small percentage of people will still get infected with the disease. The vaccine however greatly reduces the risk of severe symptoms and even death.
If I have already contracted COVID-19 disease and recovered, do I still need to get a COVID-19 vaccine?	Yes, one can still get the COVID-19 vaccine even after being infected by the disease as long as they are fully recovered. However, those who are currently infected with COVID-19 should postpone vaccination until after their illness has run its course and after they have met the health authorities' criteria to discontinue isolation (completion of the 10 days of isolation). People who received certain treatments during illness may need to delay vaccination until the end of a 90-day period. Consult the health worker to find out when you are eligible to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

How long does immunity last after COVID-19 vaccination?	Researchers do not know yet how long immunity lasts after vaccination. That is why continuation of public health prevention practices are extremely important.
If I get a COVID-19 vaccine, will it cause a false positive for COVID-19 diagnostic testing (i.e. PCR or antigen tests)?	Receiving the COVID-19 vaccine will not cause a positive PCR or antigen laboratory test result since these specific tests check for active disease and not whether an individual is immune or not.
Is vaccination against COVID-19 disease mandatory for all persons residing in Kenya?	While it is not mandatory to get the COVID-19 vaccine, the government urges all those eligible to get vaccinated. The vaccines are available and are approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health (MoH).

Receiving the vaccine is very critical for Kenya and the world at large to respond to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 disease and to protect the lives of the most vulnerable.

Data also shows that a country with high immunization coverage greatly reduces the rate of COVID-19 transmission. |