



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists

Issued by: Department of Health

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES PEOPLE TO REPORT VACCINE ADVERSE EVENTS

Pretoria: The Department of Health has noted with concern a video clip circulating on social media platforms depicting a male patient suffering from what looks like a throat cancer, claiming this to be the result of a COVID-19 vaccine.

The Department would like to remind and call upon all people who experience any adverse events following immunisation to immediately report to the nearest health facility or vaccination site. Each province and district have allocated persons who are responsible for investigating severe and serious adverse events following immunisation within 48 hours since it has been identified or the health system has been notified thereof. However, there is no time limit to reporting an event.

All adverse events following immunisation are taken seriously, and appropriate action can only be taken if they are reported. COVID-19 vaccines are very safe and highly effective at preventing hospitalisation and death, therefore we discourage members of the public from using other people's health conditions and life experiences to push their personal theories to justify the unjustifiable opposition to this life-saving intervention.

All vaccines and medicines have side effects, with the majority of COVID-19 vaccine side effects being minor and resolving within 2-3 days. While individuals respond differently to vaccination and side effects differ slightly among the vaccines, the most common side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines include headache, mild fever, chills, pain and/or redness at the injection site, fatigue, muscle pain, nausea and mild diarrhoea.

Serious adverse events following immunisation are very rarely caused by immunisation. They are most often health events that would have happened regardless of whether a vaccine was received. Rare vaccine adverse events can be managed successfully if they are identified early.

Uncommon, severe and serious adverse events should always be reported, so that they are fully investigated, including those that need medical attention or hospitalisation. It is important to understand if the vaccine was responsible for the event, or whether it happened coincidentally to vaccination, even those that have improved clinically or resolved spontaneously.

Upon reporting the case, the assigned investigators will obtain the medical records of the person who experienced the adverse event, and submit these data to the National Immunisation Safety Expert Committee (NISEC) without making any judgement themselves on the cause of the adverse event.

Adverse events following immunisation may be reported using the **Med Safety App** (<https://medsafety.sahpra.org.za/>) or by completing a paper '**Case report form**' which may be accessed at <https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/adverse-event-following-immunization-aefi/>. The form should be returned by email to AEFI@health.gov.za.

Alternatively, the COVID-19 Public Hotline can be contacted on 0800 0299 99.

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