



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists
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Health department opens for additional booster doses for individuals at high risk

Pretoria: The Department of Health has been receiving enquiries as to whether additional COVID-19 vaccine booster doses will be made available to provide ongoing protection, especially for older persons and those who are immunocompromised who are at the highest risk of severe COVID complications.

At the current moment, adults between the ages of 18 – 49 years are eligible to receive a total of three doses, whilst those 50 years and older are eligible to receive four doses. Consideration is being given to offering an additional booster dose to both age groups. This would mean that adults aged 18 – 49 years would be eligible to receive a total of four doses, while those 50 years and older would be eligible to receive five doses.

There is little experience of ideal booster intervals and there is a high level of immunity in the community. At this stage the intention is to provide another booster at an interval between the previous and the additional booster dose of a minimum of 180 days (six months). This next booster will be a voluntary dose and not part of a wide community campaign.

In addition, all children aged 5 – 11 years living with conditions that place them at risk of severe COVID disease, will be offered vaccination with two doses of the paediatric Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine early next year, with an interval of 21 days between the two doses.

This will include children with chronic respiratory, heart, neurological, kidney, liver and gastrointestinal conditions as well as those with certain endocrine disorders, serious genetic abnormalities and other conditions associated with immunosuppression.

Only children referred by a clinician will be eligible for vaccination, and consent for vaccination will need to be provided by the child's legal guardian. More information regarding the additional booster doses and vaccination of children between the ages of 5 – 11 years will be provided once available.

Despite the current low hospitalisation and mortality rates, the pandemic continues threaten the lives of vulnerable people. Vaccination still provide the best protection against severe disease as well as Long Covid, and the department therefore continues to encourage everyone to protect themselves through vaccination.

For more information and media enquiries, please contact:

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