

# To vaccinate or not to vaccinate – That is the question

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Since the start of the pandemic, many South Africans have been infected with the virus. Some, unfortunately, lost their battle against the current virus. The only way we can fight the virus is to gain immunity against this virus. At the start of this year, we received the good news that there are a few vaccines that will be released to help us fight the fight against the COVID-19 virus. Some examples include:



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1. Pfizer
2. Moderna
3. AstraZeneca
4. Gaymela/Sputnik
5. Coronavac
6. CanSino Biologics
7. Novavax
8. Jansen (Johnson & Johnson)

It was decided that South Africa would be receiving the vaccine from AstraZeneca. All excited and ready to receive our batch, it was then proven that the selected vaccine from AstraZeneca was not effective against the current variant facing South Africans. It was then decided that we will be receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine made its debut in middle February 2021, and since then, all the provinces embarked on a campaign to vaccinate all their frontline health workers against the COVID-19 virus.

Before we started vaccinating, there was quite a bit of concern regarding the vaccine and many people were quite hesitant to register to take the vaccine. Some of the myths included the following:

1. The vaccine contains a microchip
2. The vaccine was formulated quite quickly, was all safety measures adhered to and proper processes followed
3. COVID-19 virus is transmitted via the new 5G network
4. The vaccine will alter my DNA
5. The vaccine will affect my fertility

So before we could even think of starting to vaccinate, we had to educate all our fellow healthcare workers on the benefits of receiving the vaccine, what possible side effects they may have, all the contraindications as well as what to do or how to manage if a patient goes into anaphylactic shock. We also had to debunk all the myths and assure that the vaccine is safe and effective.

So, why do you need to vaccinate? That's the age-old question that's asked, and there are quite a few strongly opinionated views as to why you shouldn't vaccinate. There are many benefits to opting for the vaccine. The benefits of vaccination extend beyond the prevention of specific diseases in individuals. They enable a rich, multifaceted harvest for societies and nations. Vaccination makes good economic sense and meets the need to care for the weakest members of societies.

Reducing global mortality by facilitating universal access to safe vaccines of proven efficacy is a moral obligation for the international community as it is a human right for every individual to have the opportunity to live a healthier and fuller life.

By vaccinating against the COVID-19 virus, you are preparing your body to be ready to defend itself if it is to be exposed to the virus. Your immune system will be ready to fight against the virus. Let us do our part, let us vaccinate and face the virus and bring an end to the current pandemic.