



REGULAR FORCE
MEDICAL CONTINUATION FUND

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COVID - 19 Vaccine Brings Hope

As the COVID - 19 infections continue to spread and countless lives are lost, the vaccine becomes a critical necessity for the health and safety of our VPA members.

Here are some critical questions answered about the COVID - 19 vaccine.

When will RFMCF Military Pensioners receive the COVID - 19 vaccines?

The SAMHS has confirmed that the COVID - 19 vaccination roll-out programme will be done in a phased approach (as per the National Department of Health protocol). It must be noted that the National Department of Health is the process owner for the Covid vaccine strategic roll out plan. The phased approach for vaccines will be introduced as follows in the SAMHS:

- **Phase 1:** Healthcare workers (HCW): All health sector workers and key personnel.
- **Phase 2:** Essential workers: Deployed members, Persons in congregate settings (military courses), persons >18 years with co-morbidities, persons aged >60 years and Military Pensioners.
- **Phase 3:** Other persons >18 years not included in Phase 1 and 2.

Please refer to the RFMCF website (www.rfmcf.co.za) under "Member Information" where we will update you on all the latest developments on COVID - 19 and its vaccinations, or click [here](#).

Where can RFMCF members obtain the COVID - 19 vaccines during Phase 2?

The primary service provider for Military Pensioners to obtain the COVID - 19 vaccines will be at the SAMHS facilities. If you are not within a close proximity (50 kilometers) to a SAMHS facility, you will be accommodated by other means and further information will be communicated to you about how you will receive your vaccination closer to the time.

As a Military Pensioner and member of the RFMCF, would my beneficiaries also qualify for the COVID - 19 vaccine when I receive mine during Phase 2?

The roll-out of the vaccine depends on how the individual is classified during the phased approach (as indicated above). You, as a Military Pensioner, will qualify for the vaccine during Phase 2, however, your spouse and children might fall under Phase 3.

This means you might not receive the vaccine at the same time in your household. Please note that all beneficiaries of RFMCF will qualify for the vaccine.

Will I only have to receive one vaccination, or will I need to receive multiple vaccinations?

This all depends on the specific vaccine you receive. Some vaccines are administered in a single dose while others in 2 doses. All this information will be made available to you when you receive your first dose.

If I received a specific COVID - 19 vaccine as my initial vaccination, should I continue with that product, or can I change to another brand?

Whilst research is still being done on many of these issues, best practices will be provided by the WHO, and the scientific community. How best the specific doses will work, and the combination of vaccines and such issues, will be provided by the information received from these institutions. You will be provided with the most appropriate information affecting your situation. Information will be provided to you once you receive the first vaccine, and should there be a second dose or not, you will be advised thereof. The National Department of Health is engaged in negotiations with various pharmaceutical companies in trying to secure stock of the COVID - 19 vaccine. Guidance will be provided to members by the health professionals who administer the vaccine.

How often should I get vaccinated with the COVID - 19 vaccine?

Whether annual vaccination will be necessary like with flu, is still to be determined. Feedback will be provided as information becomes available.

Can my doctor prescribe antibiotics to treat COVID - 19?

There are various clinical protocols for treating this virus. Your doctor will know best on which treatment protocol to use dependent on your symptoms.

Will RFMCF cover the costs of the COVID - 19 Vaccine?

Yes, the Fund will cover the cost of privately obtained vaccines. It is important to note that this will be based on the directions provided by the SAMHS.

Will I have to pay for the vaccine or for the consultation to obtain the COVID - 19 vaccine if I receive it at a private healthcare facility?

Members should not have out of pocket expenses for the vaccine so long as they follow the communicated process of obtaining the vaccine.

Can I get COVID - 19 from the COVID - 19 vaccine?

No, none of the vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID - 19. This means that a COVID - 19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID - 19.

Can I still be infected with COVID - 19 after getting the vaccine?

COVID-19 will be with us for some time and you can be reinfected. An individual who has been vaccinated can still contract COVID-19, although they are more likely to be asymptomatic (that is they do not experience any symptoms) or experience mild symptoms.

Will there be any side effects when I am given the COVID - 19 vaccine?

Medical staff is available at all vaccination stations to immediately treat patients that show any effects, such as anaphylaxis. This process is not unique to the COVID - 19 vaccination stations. Anaphylaxis, an allergic reaction to vaccines, is rare and symptoms often occur within 15-30 minutes of the vaccination. It is normal to have certain reactions after a vaccination: There may be redness, swelling or pain around the injection site. Fatigue, fever, headache, and aching limbs are also not uncommon in the first three days after vaccination. These normal vaccine reactions are usually mild and subside after a few days.

Should I still wear my mask and practice social distancing after I received the vaccine?

Yes. The required hygienic measurements, along with wearing a mask and social distancing should remain standard practice to avoid the continuous spread of the virus.

Further communications will follow.

