

Report adverse effects from Covid jabs, Department of Health urges

By  Katja Hamilton

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The Department of Health called upon all people who experience any adverse events following immunisation to immediately report to the nearest health facility or vaccination site.



Source: [Pxabay](#)

It said in a [statement](#) on Wednesday, that each province and district has allocated persons who are responsible for investigating severe and serious adverse events following immunisation.

All vaccines and medicines have side effects, it said, with the majority of Covid-19 vaccine side effects being minor and resolving within two to three 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," Dr Tshwale, Media Liaison Officer for the Health Minister said.

The Department of Health's most recent messaging did not elaborate on what severe symptoms the public should be looking out for.

Western Cape Government stressed in a pamphlet - distributed at vaccination sites as far back as April last year - that the common side effects of the vaccine start around six hours after the vaccine, peak at 24 hours and resolve in two to three days. These side effects show your body is building an immune response. The technical term for this is 'reactogenicity'.



Over half of adults support compulsory workplace vaccination, survey finds

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Severe effects to look out for

The Western Cape Government urged those who had been vaccinated - and who were experiencing severe side effects as a result - to contact their healthcare provider, particularly if the symptoms last longer than three days, or if they develop any of the following symptoms within a month of vaccination:

- * New-onset severe headache especially if accompanied with blurred vision, vomiting, weakness on one side of the body or difficulty speaking.
- * Severe abdominal pain that does not go away.
- * A rash of tiny red spots around the site of the injection.
- * A painful or cold leg
- * Chest pain or shortness of breath.

Rare side-effects affect one to four people per million vaccinated, it said. They include a severe reaction called anaphylaxis, which can occur within minutes to hours of being vaccinated, and a rare form of blood clots which can occur between four days and three weeks of being vaccinated.

Report your symptoms

The Department of Health said, Wednesday, there is no time limit to reporting an adverse event.

"All adverse events following immunisation are taken seriously, and appropriate action can only be taken if they are reported. 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 [events] 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](#) or by completing a paper 'Case report form' which may be accessed [here](#). 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.

Push back on mandatory workplace vaccinations

The Department of Health's call to action on reporting adverse reactions from Covid-19 vaccinations comes at a critical juncture in South Africa when citizens are pushing back hard against mandatory workplace vaccinations.

This, on the basis of concerns around how the vaccinations will impact their health.

Already big companies such as PSG and Discovery have encouraged employees to get vaccinated, while mining service partner, Fraser Alexander has implemented a mandatory vaccination policy.



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Human rights activist and lawyer, Schalk van der Merwe, said on Monday, he has been inundated with phone calls and emails from South Africans who are saying they're being refused entry to their workplaces on the basis of being unvaccinated.

In November last year, Schalk filed papers at Constitutional Court against the president and Cabinet over mandatory vaccines. "There are already about 5 000 people now whom we know of with job injuries. It's everything from headaches through to people who have organ failure," he said.

"There are many serious cases. One of the tragic cases is a young man of 32 years whose company pressured him to get the vaccine," he said.

Van der Merwe said the healthy young man had two strokes and a heart attack within 48 hours of being vaccinated.

Van der Merwe said he now deals with Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration-related cases of workers who have been fired due to not complying with mandatory workplace vaccinations.

"Many workplaces in South Africa, by far not the majority, prescribe to mandatory vaccinations - and it is practically illegal for them to do that. There is no legal basis for it," he said.

Whether these workplaces will refuse access to part-vaccinated employees is unknown.

In August last year the Department of Health published an [article](#), saying "an immediate allergic reaction of any severity to a previous dose or a known (diagnosed) allergy to a component of the Covid-19 vaccines' is medical grounds for an employee not agreeing to take a vaccine".



Call to legalise work access restrictions for unvaccinated

Katja Hamilton 29 Nov 2021



"Unjustifiable opposition to life-saving intervention"

The Department of Health has, in the meantime, 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.

"Serious adverse events following immunisation are very rarely caused by immunisation," the Department said. "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.

"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."

ABOUT KATJA HAMILTON

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