

# Teachers to be vaccinated from next week

The National Health Department says it is ready to start vaccinating teachers in their numbers from next week.



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Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccines are expected to arrive in the country tomorrow afternoon.

This is according to the department's Technical Advisor, Dr Aquina Thulare, who was briefing Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Health.

Thulare said the aircraft carrying the consignment of 300,000 Covid-19 J&J shots will touch down at OR Tambo International Airport on Friday, 18 June 2021.

The US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has cleared this batch for use in the country.

The rollout of the single-dose vaccine suffered some setbacks after the FDA halted production following the investigation of

good manufacturing practice (GMP) violations at the J&J factory in Baltimore, United States.

Because of these problems, two million vaccine doses that had already been produced, were declared unusable.

However, the country's vaccination rollout programme will soon gain momentum, as millions of doses are expected to be released from this month.

"The School Governing Body (SGB) databases have been verified and private school databases have been verified," Thulare said, adding that vaccination centres have also been identified.

She told the committee that a special Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) programme will be dedicated to the education sector.

Meanwhile, single-dose vaccines have already received South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (Sahpra) exemption on labelling and genetically modified organisms (GMO) certificates.



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Kate Collier, Shane Johnson and Heather Mudau 14 Jun 2021



"The National Control Laboratory is ready to ensure that these vaccines are released on the 21st of June and will start distributing on the 22nd of June, and will start vaccinating immediately thereafter," said Thulare.

She has also confirmed that the vaccine expiry date has been extended.

"The FDA did some stability studies on the vaccines they were going to supply to us and the expiry date has been extended by four weeks from the initial date."

She said she was confident that the department will be able to vaccinate 300,000 education sector staff out of the 499 000 in 10 working days.

Thereafter, the 199,000 remaining staffers will be inoculated with the additional 1.2 million J&J vaccines arriving next week.

"We believe that all the educators will be covered."

She said that all teachers will be vaccinated regardless of their age.

Thulare said the department is in discussions with the other sectors, including the South African Police Service, South African National Defence Force and Correctional Services.

## Keep safe

The Acting Minister of Health, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, has since called on citizens to adhere to safety protocol as the country entered the third wave of Covid-19.

"This is what is worrying us now. Gauteng is our major concern."

She said she was concerned about mass gatherings, including those of political parties on June 16, despite the country now operating under lockdown level 3.

“We hope that law enforcement agencies will assist us in this regard,” said Kubayi-Ngubane.

Meanwhile, she said the department will embark on mass testing, as the country recorded over 13,000 new cases on Wednesday.

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