

Children between 12-17 to get one Pfizer vaccine

South Africa will start vaccinating children between the ages of 12 and 17 next week using the Pfizer vaccine, the health minister said on Friday, as the country looks to ratchet up inoculations ahead of final year examinations



Source: ©Cathy Yeulet^{123rf}

In August, hundreds of South Africans formed long lines to get their Covid-19 shots when the government made vaccinations available to all adults to try to meet a target of inoculating 70% of the adult population by December.

"This service will start on the 20 October to allow the necessary preparations on the EVDS (electronic vaccination data system) registration system and also other logistical preparations," Health Minister Joe Phaahla says.

Only one shot

Last month, South Africa's health regulator approved the Pfizer vaccine for use in children aged 12 and older, as the continent's worst-hit nation in terms of deaths and overall infections emerges from its third wave of the pandemic.

However, Phaahla said that on the advice of its vaccine advisory committee the government would only give teenagers a single shot of Pfizer's normal two-shot regime due to concerns that it may affect the heart.

"The timing of the second dose will be informed by further information on this rarely observed side-effect which has no

permanent risk," Phaahla says of cases of transient myocarditis.

He added that the government was considering giving a booster shot to high-risk health care workers, who were the first to receive doses of the J&J vaccine almost eight months ago.

The country's Medical Research Council has applied to the health regulator to consider approving a J&J booster shot because of its potential to strengthen immunity among health workers.

"We will wait on the results of this application," Phaahla says.

Source: Reuters Connect

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