

WPE HANDOUT: DO COVID-19 VACCINES WORK?



1. Introduce the topic:

- The vaccines approved for use in South Africa have been shown to be safe and effective.
- Vaccination will protect most people from getting COVID-19 and prevent the people who do still get infected with COVID-19 from falling seriously ill.
- The COVID-19 vaccine offers almost 100% protection against hospitalisation and death due to COVID-19.



2. Top five things you need to know:

1. The COVID-19 vaccines work by creating an immune response to the COVID-19 virus. They teach your body to fight the virus without you having to fall ill.
2. It takes about two weeks after your vaccination for your body to build up this protection. During these two weeks you will not yet be protected against COVID-19.
3. Scientists are confident that the vaccines will also offer some protection against the new variants of the virus. They are also constantly monitoring virus mutations to see if the vaccines need to be changed.
4. We know that vaccination will provide us with at least six month's immunity but need to learn more about how long we will be protected for. We may need booster doses in the future if immunity doesn't last as long as we would like it to.
5. While we are still learning about the virus, we need to do everything we can to stop it spreading. This means that as well as having the vaccine, we need to continue wearing masks, practicing social distancing, and washing our hands regularly.



3. Points to discuss with the group:

- Can you explain how vaccines work to protect us against illness?
- What are some of the things we need to do to stop the spread of COVID-19?