

**HEADLINE:** Born before 1986? Here's how to get a COVID vaccine without an appointment

**BLURB:** We look at who can get a COVID vaccine under phase two of South Africa's national roll-out, what happens when you walk into a site and how the cost of shots are covered.

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COVID-19 vaccines in South Africa are currently only available to people of 35 and older and healthcare workers.

School staff, police officers, soldiers, inmates & correctional services staff are receiving vaccines through a [separate essential worker programme](#).

Companies in the mining, manufacturing and taxi industry are also immunising their employees.

The health department will announce when other age groups become eligible.

Everyone who gets a job must first be registered.

Healthcare & essential workers register in a different way to people over 35.

This is to prevent people from falsely registering for a vaccine under these categories.

People of 35 and older who want to get vaccinated need to register on the [government's electronic vaccine data system \(EVDS\)](#).

This can be done in five ways:

1. On the internet, using the EVDS website
2. By texting the hotline on WhatsApp
3. Using a USSD code on your phone
4. In-person at a vaccination site
5. Through healthcare workers going to communities

After you have registered, you will be sent an SMS that confirms your registration. Once a spot becomes available in your area the EVDS will send you an SMS with the details of your appointment.

Can you go to a vaccination site without an appointment?

The short answer: [Yes — but there are a few rules](#).

You can only walk into a site if you are in the current qualifying category set by the department of health.

At this time that only applies to people over the age of 35.

It is then up to the site manager to decide if they will accept walk-in vaccines on a particular day.

All public sites have been instructed to take as many walk-ins as possible.

Here's what sites have to consider before allowing walk-ins:

There have to be enough vaccines on-site for people with appointments first.

Only then can remaining doses be used for walk-ins.

Sites should try to create a separate queue for walk-ins so scheduled appointments can be prioritised.

Everyone who gets vaccinated must first be registered on the EVDS. This can be done at the site for walk-ins, so don't forget to bring a form of ID.

You are not guaranteed to get a vaccine on the day you walk in and may be asked to return on another day.

No one may be charged anything at a vaccination site when receiving their jab.

The vaccine cost will be covered by the state for those without insurance or by your medical aid scheme, if you belong to one.

[This now also includes walk-ins at private sites](#). Previously the government would only reimburse the cost of people without medical aid [who were over 80 years old](#).

The new policy encourages all sites to accept any walk-ins regardless of medical aid status — [although private sites can't be forced to do so](#).