



## DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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### **Africa CDC calls on the population to shun myths surrounding COVID-19 vaccines**

The African Union (AU) through the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has called on the African population to shun away from the misleading information and myths surrounding the COVID-19 vaccines.

It should be noted that safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines are the most critical and game-changing tool to fight against the pandemic in the region. Africa CDC is at the centre of Africa's COVID-19 vaccine acquisition and distribution through the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) and hopes to fully vaccinate 60% of the African population by the end of next year, 2022.

However, one of the biggest challenges facing the health sector and officials is false and misleading claims about the covid-19 vaccine, including expecting mothers, from getting vaccinated, which may result in an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths on the continent.

Speaking at the weekly news COVID19 media conference on 7 October 2021, Dr. John Nkengasong, the Director of the Africa CDC noted that myths have been part of the vaccination process even before COVID-19 and should be ignored.

“We have to admit that behaviour towards vaccines is an issue that has been there before. Vaccine hesitancy has been there and those who have been in the polio vaccination programs will confirm that we have always had such issues.”

“We just have to make sure that we use the community approaches to increase awareness of the vaccines. When you have a new product, it is expected that the community will be divided, but that hesitance is not static, and there's a tendency to move in the right direction once people are more engaged and informed about the benefits of the vaccines.”

On the other hand, the Africa CDC is encouraged by the member states that have continued to fight against the pandemic.

“Some countries are making very good progress in terms of advancing the population that is fully vaccinated. According to the records, Morocco has got 53% of its population fully vaccinated, South Africa is at 16%, Egypt 6%, Algeria at 9%, and Tunisia has 26% of its population fully vaccinated.”

He added; “Africa CDC is continuing to work with member states and support their rollout of the vaccinations. We have people all over the region to help roll out the vaccines. Today we have a total of 200 million doses of vaccines that have been supplied to 53 member states. Of that number, 156 million doses have been administered, accounting for 76.77% of the total supply available.”

### What You Need to Know

- COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all people 12 years and older, including people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future.
- Evidence about the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy has been growing. These data suggest that the benefits of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine outweigh any known or potential risks of vaccination during pregnancy.
- There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems in women or men.
- Pregnant and recently pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people.
- Getting a COVID-19 vaccine can protect you from a severe illness and/ or death.

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