

South Africa to start jabs for kids as young as 12

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South Africa will begin vaccinating children as young as 12 next week and also offer COVID-19 boosters against certain immune disorders, the health minister announced Friday.

With a large youth population and the world's biggest HIV caseload, the announcement affects millions of people and marks a significant scaling up of South Africa's pandemic response.

"We ready to open up vaccination for children between 12-17 years of age, and a majority of this cohort are in the secondary or high school level," Health Minister Joe Phaahla told a news conference.

Under South African law, children aged 12 and up can give their own consent for [medical treatment](#), meaning they don't need parental permission to get the vaccine.

Starting Wednesday, children can receive a single Pfizer dose, with a second shot delayed to allow for further study on a rare side effect, the minister added.

More than one third of all adults in South Africa have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, the minister added.

The country has launched a digital vaccine certificate scheme. Proof of vaccination is required to enter larger gatherings such as [sporting events](#).

For the immune compromised, Phaahla said they can begin receiving boosters, but only on advice from their doctor.

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