Q&A about Covid-19 vaccine
What is COVID19- vaccine?
A vaccine designed to stimulate the body’s immune system to generate antibodies for COVID-19 virus and safely fight it. The effectiveness of currently available vaccines ranges between 60 - 95%.

What standards are approved by the Sultanate in the selection of the vaccine?
Oman has adopted the principle of buying the vaccine after receiving verification from the country of origin. Health institutions all over the Sultanate have put magnificent efforts in vaccine storage and use as it requires specific environmental conditions not similar to other vaccines.

Over all national and international epidemiological situation.

How is the research and development process being accelerated without compromising safety?
Given the urgent need for COVID19- vaccines, unprecedented financial investments and scientific collaborations, some of the steps in the research and development process have been conducting in parallel, while still maintaining strict clinical and safety standards.
When will COVID19- vaccines be ready for distribution?

Most estimates suggest that the arrival of the agreed batches to the Sultanate will start during December 2020; the distribution process and the vaccination of target groups will be consequently commenced.

How quickly could COVID-19 vaccines stop the pandemic?

The impact of COVID19- vaccines on the pandemic will depend on:

- The effectiveness of the used vaccines; how quickly they are approved, manufactured, and delivered in the required quantities within a specified period.

- Vaccine target groups

- Coverage rate related to number of people who will be vaccinated.
How many doses of the vaccine indicated?

Most Covid-19 vaccines are using two dose regimens. The time between doses depends on the type of vaccine, ranging from 21 - 28 days.

What is the time interval between them?

Will Covid-19 vaccines provide long-term protection?

It is too early to tell whether Covid19- vaccines will provide long-term protection, or how long the vaccine will last to protect the body, more research is needed to answer this question. However according to the currently available information, the vaccine will provide protection from appearance of disease’s symptoms and disease’s complications.
There is currently no evidence to suggest that any of the vaccines already in use for other diseases can provide protection from Covid-19. For example, the seasonal influenza vaccine is ineffective against the Covid-19 because this virus belongs to a different viral family not covered by the seasonal influenza vaccine.

What is the mechanism of vaccine distribution?

Vaccination will be in two stages:

First: The high-risk groups including the elderly, those with chronic diseases (diabetes, kidney failure on dialysis, chronic lung diseases) and health-care workers who provide direct service to Covid-19 patients.

Second: Will include all other categories.
What was mechanism of vaccine distribution based on?

- Continuous assessment of the global and local epidemiological situation.
- The study of the National Sero Survey study.
- The population based analysis study conducted by MOH to identify the factors affecting the severity and mortality caused by Covid19- disease.
- The instructions by World Health Organization.
- The limited manufacturing and supply resources for the quantities required of the vaccine within a specified period.
What are the target groups for taking the vaccine in the first phase?

**Target groups in community**
- Elderly 65 years of age and above with diabetes.
- Those with kidney failure and who are on dialysis.
- Those with chronic lung diseases including:
  - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
  - Asthma (with a disease severity ranging between moderate to severe)
  - Interstitial lung disease (ILD)

**Target groups of health care workers**
- ICU staff
- Staff working in Covid19-wards
- Employees who have any of the following: diabetes, obesity (BMI more than or equal to 40), being on dialysis, chronic lung disease as detailed in the target groups in community.
Do vaccines have side effects?

Symptoms associated with taking the vaccine range from local pain, redness and swelling at injection site to fever, which are the same symptoms associated with taking any other vaccine. Some other side effects have been recorded in low proportions such as sore throat, nausea, joint pain and general fatigue, which indicates that the body’s immune system is beginning to respond to the vaccine.

No serious side effects were recorded during the clinical trial phase.

Consult the doctor of the platelet/bleeding disorder patients to determine whether they can be given the vaccine since it is given as intramuscular injections, and specify when to take the vaccine so that it does not cause bleeding at the needle site.

Is the vaccine safe for patients with platelet or bleeding disorders?
When does the effect of the vaccine expected to start?

This duration varies depending on the type of vaccine used, for (phase - I) vaccine, the effect would start 7 days after taking the second dose of the vaccine.

What instructions should I follow with regard to the vaccine?

- Show a quick response and go to the health institution as soon as you are notified that you are among the vaccine target group.

- Commit to take the second dose of the vaccine 21 days after the first dose, in order to obtain the desired efficacy, as a single dose of the vaccine is considered ineffective.

- Note that the effect of the vaccine begins 7 days after the second dose is taken. Before that period, the person is still susceptible to infection and should go to the health institution for evaluation if any symptoms of the disease appear.

- Continue to adhere to other preventive measures such as hand washing, wearing mask and physical distancing after taking the vaccine doses, as taking the vaccine will not cancel the need for these measures.

- Do not pay attention to rumors and take information about the vaccine from reliable official sources.
Will getting the vaccine cancel the need of other preventive measures?

No. Vaccine will be complementary to other preventive measures as vaccine will not target all of the population at once; hence, there will always be a high-risk people around us who did not get the vaccine yet hence could get the infection unless we comply with preventive measures. In addition, the vaccine will prevent disease symptoms and mitigate disease complications while preventive measures will continue to reduce the potential of infection transmission to the person.

Will the vaccine be mandatory?

No. There is no legal rule for making the vaccine compulsory. Taking the vaccine will be based on the conviction of individuals in the community about the importance of taking the vaccine that will be supported by awareness and the promotion of a sense of responsibility and national duty.

Will the vaccine be a travel requirement?

Making the vaccine as a travel requirement will depend on each country’s national policies and on the availability of the vaccine in the quantities that allow it to be used as an additional requirement or as an alternative to PCR test and isolation.
Is it necessary for those who have already had Covid19- to take the vaccine?

According to the studies, the vaccine can be taken regardless of whether a person has been infected with the disease in the past. However, this category will not be among the priority categories for the time being but will be postponed to other stages if indicated.