

Russia Begins Coronavirus Vaccine Rollout

September 08, 2020



Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Russia has begun releasing its coronavirus vaccine to the general public, the Health Ministry [announced](#) Tuesday as developers prepare to conduct large-scale clinical trials while administering the shot to civilians.

Its developer has said that a yearlong mass vaccination campaign would begin as soon as the Sputnik V vaccine entered civil circulation.

Related article: [Russia Vaccine Passes Early Trial Test – The Lancet](#)

“The first batch of the Gam-COVID-Vac (Sputnik V) vaccine ... passed the needed quality tests ... and was released into civil circulation,” the Health Ministry said.

“First batches of the vaccine are expected to be delivered to the regions in the near future,” it added without specifying numbers.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko [said](#) Monday that the first deliveries of Sputnik V would be “small for the time being.” He had previously said that the adenovirus-based vector vaccine would first be shipped to health workers and teachers.

The ministry’s announcement follows a flurry of [reports](#) saying that several high-level Russian government officials have received the Sputnik V vaccine and made public appearances in good health.

The state-run Gamaleya epidemiology and microbiology research center that developed Sputnik V has estimated that it would need to produce [80 million](#) doses to achieve mass immunity.

Gamaleya said earlier that 25,000 out of the needed 40,000 volunteers have been recruited to take part in Phase 3 trials. Ten thousand of them will receive placebos in the double-blind trial.

Russia has officially reported more than 1 million coronavirus infections and almost 18,000 deaths since recording its first case in March. It is one of several countries racing to develop a safe and effective vaccine against Covid-19.

Recently published peer-reviewed research into early clinical trials [said](#) that Sputnik V did not cause serious adverse effects in patients but noted that longer trials are needed to establish its effectiveness.

More than 20 countries have requested over 1 billion doses of Russia’s vaccine despite safety concerns raised by health experts.

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