The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Says Its Sputnik V Coronavirus Vaccine 95% Effective

November 24, 2020



Russia plans to start mass vaccination against the coronavirus in 2021. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine is 95% effective, its developers said Tuesday as Russia seeks a leading role in the high-stakes global race for a safe, effective vaccine that can end to the deadly pandemic.

The calculations were based on preliminary data obtained 42 days after volunteers received the first dose, the Health Ministry, the state-run Gamaleya research center and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) said in a joint statement.

Related article: Russia to Freeze-Dry Coronavirus Vaccine to Avoid Distribution Challenges – Reuters

The statement said the vaccine had shown 91.4% effectiveness 28 days after the first dose, a figure based on 39 cases.

Forty-two days later, after a second dose, data showed "an efficacy of the vaccine above 95%."

They did not note the number of cases used to make the calculation, however.

Alexander Gintsburg, the Gamaleya Center's director, said the interim results showed that the volunteers' "bodies have partially reacted to both doses."

"We expect the efficacy rate to be even higher based on the data three weeks after the second immunization when the body's strongest and most stable response is achieved," Gintsburg said.

The jab is still undergoing post-registration trials, with more than 19,000 out of the 40,000 participating volunteers having received both doses of either the vaccine or placebo so far. Some of those vaccinated experienced short-term "minor" adverse events including flu-like symptoms like fever, weakness, fatigue and headache.

Scientists in the West have raised concerns about the speed of development of Russia's coronavirus vaccines, suggesting that researchers might be cutting corners after coming under pressure from the authorities to deliver.

While several high-ranking Russian officials have already received the vaccine, the Kremlin on Tuesday said that President Vladimir Putin won't decide whether to receive the jab or not until its clinical trials have been completed and it is certified.

Russia plans to start mass vaccination against the coronavirus in 2021, Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova, who is overseeing Russia's Covid-19 response, said earlier Tuesday. Developers plan to produce 2 million doses of the Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine by the end of 2020.

RDIF's international manufacturing partners are expected to produce the vaccine for more than half a billion people in 2021.

It will be free of charge for Russian citizens and will cost less than $10 per dose for international recipients, said the RDIF, the sovereign wealth fund bankrolling and marketing the two-dose adenoviral vaccine.

The wealth fund and its partners have launched production of a freeze-dried form of Sputnik V that will be stored at temperatures between 2-8 degrees Celsius, enabling its distribution to remote and tropical areas.

AFP contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/11/24/russia-says-its-sputnik-v-coronavirus-vaccine-95-effective-a72135