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No Alcohol for 2 Months, Russia Tells Coronavirus Vaccine Recipients

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Denis Voronin / Moskva News Agency

Recipients of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine should abstain from alcohol for nearly two months before and after immunization, the head of Russia's consumer safety watchdog said Tuesday.

Rospotrebnadzor head Anna Popova's instructions follow Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova's recommendations to avoid alcohol and immunosuppressants for 42 days because the two-shot vaccine is administered with a 21-day gap between doses.

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"The intake of alcohol needs to stop at least two weeks prior to immunization," Popova said in an interview with Radio Komsomolskaya Pravda.

Recipients should then abstain from alcohol for "42 days after the first injection," Popova

added. “Immunity is being formed and one needs to take care.”

“It’s a strain on the body. If we want to stay healthy and have a strong immune response, don't drink alcohol,” she pleaded with Russians, who are among the world’s highest alcohol consumers despite seeing a significant decline in consumption since 2003.

Popova also advised against smoking before and after vaccination because tobacco smoke irritates the lung and skews immune responses.

Following Popova's comments, Alexander Gintsburg, the head of the state-run Gamaleya research center that developed Sputnik V, said that while one shouldn't abuse alcohol before or after vaccination, "a single glass of champagne never hurt anyone."

Russia's Covid-19 vaccination drive for high-risk volunteers began in Moscow this weekend despite Sputnik V still undergoing post-registration clinical trials for safety. Its developers say the adenovirus-based vaccine is 95% effective against the virus.

Health officials estimate that 100,000 Russians have received Sputnik V, including trial participants and members of the military.

Russia has the world’s fourth-highest Covid-19 caseload of over 2.5 million and the 10th-highest fatality count with 44,000 deaths.

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