

EU assessing Moderna's Omicron jab

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The EU's medicines watchdog said Tuesday it was assessing Moderna's COVID-19 booster jab for new strains of the Omicron variant as fears grow of a winter wave of infections.

If approved, the adapted Spikevax shot will become the second in the

27-nation bloc's toolbox to fight the highly infectious BA.4 and BA.5 types of the [variant](#).

The European Medicines Agency said it had "started evaluating an application for the authorisation of an adapted version of Spikevax", targeting both the original COVID-19 strain and the BA.4 and 5 types.

It did not say when approval of the booster might happen.

Two weeks ago, the Amsterdam-based watchdog approved Pfizer/BioNTech's bivalent vaccine for the Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 strains.

It backed Pfizer and Moderna jabs that target the BA.1 type at the start of September.

The Britain, Canada and the United States have also approved anti-Omicron jabs.

While the original COVID vaccines that emerged nearly two years ago provide some protection against newer variants, the race has been on to produce jabs that specifically target the milder but more infectious Omicron strains.

Previous "variants of concern" like Alpha and Delta eventually petered out but Omicron and its sub-lineages have dominated throughout 2022.

The BA.4 and BA.5 types have in particular helped to drive new cases of the disease in Europe and the United States in recent months.

The EMA warned last week that while [death rates](#) were down the pandemic is "still ongoing" and urged countries to roll out booster programmes before winter, when cases are expected to rise.

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