

# France says COVID-19 vaccinations will be free

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Vaccinations against COVID-19 in France will be free, the prime minister said Thursday, and will begin in January for one million elderly in retirement homes, February for 14 million at-risk people and spring for the rest of the population.

Jean Castex said that thanks to orders already made at a European level, "France will have a potential of 200 million doses, which would allow 100 million people to be vaccinated" because the course requires two injections a few weeks apart.

The country's [vaccination campaign](#) could even begin in the last days of December, he told a news conference, if EU and French health authorities have approved vaccines by then.

The government's vaccine strategy would be presented to parliament this month, Castex said, emphasising that all decisions around it would be transparent.

France is one of the most [vaccine](#)-sceptic nations on Earth, with a survey on the weekend showing that only 41 percent of the 67 million population planned to get inoculated.

The government has set aside 1.5 billion euros (\$1.8 billion) for vaccinations in next year's budget.

Castex also weighed into a debate around the New Year's Eve celebrations, when gatherings are feared to send infections surging.

He said "it seems reasonable to us" to recommend no more than six adults at such gatherings, not including children.

The [prime minister](#) also highlighted that "the circulation of the virus continues to decline" with the number of daily cases expected to fall below an average of 10,000 in the days to come.

The coronavirus has killed more than 53,000 people in France.

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