

Mexico to start COVID-19 vaccinations on Thursday: govt

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Mexico will begin COVID-19 immunizations on Thursday, a day after the country receives its first batch of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines, Undersecretary of Health Hugo Lopez-Gatell said.

"Tomorrow (Wednesday) the first consignment of the Pfizer <u>vaccine</u> against SARS-CoV-2 arrives," he said Tuesday on Twitter.

"There will be a press opportunity and then the vaccine will be safeguarded until its use on Thursday, December 24, the day vaccinations start," Lopez-Gatell said.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said 1.4 million doses will arrive from Belgium of the 34.4 million that the company has agreed to deliver.

The first vaccines will be destined for frontline medical personnel, and administered in Mexico City and the northern state of Coahuila due to the logistics related to the <u>frigid temperatures</u> required for the shots.

Mexico also has preliminary purchase agreements with the Chinese-Canadian project CanSinoBio for

35 million doses and with Britain's AstraZeneca for 77.4 million doses.

It is also part of the international COVAX mechanism aimed at ensuring equitable access for all countries, which allows it to buy 51.6 million additional vaccines.

Mexico has registered 119,495 deaths linked to the virus and 1.33 million infections, according to official figures.

It has the fourth most deaths after the United States, Brazil and India, and is the 15th highest in deaths per 100,000 residents.

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