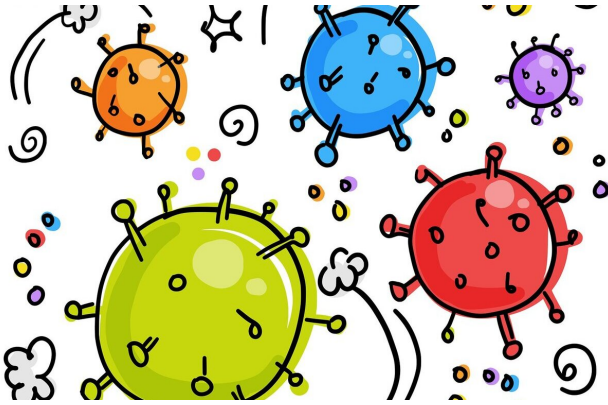


Hungary says first Chinese jabs can be given this month

5 February 2021



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Hungary plans to begin administering the Chinese-made Sinopharm coronavirus vaccine to its citizens later this month, a government minister said Friday.

Hungary broke ranks with the EU last month by becoming the first bloc member to approve and order both Sinopharm and Russia's Sputnik V jab, in quantities of five million and two million doses respectively.

The Chinese shipment "is enough for 2.5 million people," Gergely Gulyas, Prime Minister Viktor Orban's chief of staff, told a press briefing in Budapest.

"That is enough for 250,000 people in each of February, March and April, and then the rest of the contracted amount in April," he said.

Orban, who previously said that he will choose the Chinese jab for his own inoculation, said Friday that the [vaccine](#) is "on its way", but added that further tests by the Hungarian authorities would have to be carried out.

He said during a [radio interview](#) that the experiences of non-EU member Serbia—which neighbours Hungary—with both the Russian and Chinese vaccines were "reassuring".

The first batch of Russian vaccines could be administered to Hungarians "perhaps next week" pending final approval by the local public health authority, said Orban.

Hungarian officials have criticised the slow pace of vaccine approval and procurement by EU authorities, which have so far sent the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna shots to Budapest.

So far, around 260,000 people have received at least the first dose of a coronavirus vaccine, while 92,000 people have been given both shots, Orban said.

Hungary has been under a partial lockdown since November that includes an evening curfew, a gathering ban, and the closure of restaurants, schools and universities.

Gulyas said the government would weigh a gradual lifting of pandemic restrictions, with the first phase starting March 1 and the second on April 1, if there is no third wave.

Hungary's [coronavirus](#) statistics all improved during January, but have seen a small upturn in February so far.

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