

Trudeau urges Canadians to take 'safe' AstraZeneca shot

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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday urged Canadians to take the AstraZeneca vaccine, in response to reports of hesitancy after several nations halted its rollout over fears of blood clots and other side effects.

"Our experts and scientists have spent an awful lot of time making sure that every vaccine approved in Canada is both safe and effective," Trudeau told a news conference in Montreal, where he toured a COVID-19 vaccination centre.

"The best vaccine for you to take is the very first one that is offered to you," he said. "That is how we get through this as quickly as possible and as safely as possible."

France, Germany and Italy earlier became the latest countries to suspend or delay the AstraZeneca vaccine's use, despite the company and the World Health Organization insisting there is no risk.

Austria was the first on March 8 to block its distribution following the death of a 49-year-old

nurse from "severe bleeding disorders" days after receiving it.

The batch in question has been delivered to 17 countries and included one million vaccines.

Several more deaths have been reported in other countries and are being investigated for possible links to the vaccine.

Trudeau said his government is "closely monitoring what is going on with the specific batch from Europe," while reassuring that none of those doses were being distributed in Canada.

The country has ordered 20 million doses of the AstraZeneca [vaccine](#) plus two million additional shots of the same formula made by the Serum Institute of India.

Ottawa authorized its use at the end of February—adding it to its approved list alongside Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna shots—but has only just started to distribute it.

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