

Swiss to buy monkeypox vaccines after criticism over delay

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Switzerland, which until now has had no access to monkeypox vaccines, will buy a total of 100,000 doses, including 40,000 jabs aimed to rein in the current outbreak, Bern said Wednesday.

The procurement decision comes after LGBTQ groups and others have in recent weeks criticised the slow Swiss response after monkeypox in

May began spreading rapidly far beyond the West and Central African countries where it is usually found.

So far, more than 400 cases of the disease, which causes fever, muscular aches and large boil-like skin lesions, have been registered in Switzerland.

But while vaccines have been available in a range of European countries, no jabs have until now been available in Switzerland.

The Swiss government said in a Wednesday statement that it would purchase [vaccine doses](#) from Bavarian Nordic, the Danish maker of the only authorised [vaccine](#) for use against monkeypox.

In addition, it said Switzerland would acquire the antiviral drug tecovirimat, made by US pharmaceutical company SIGA Technologies, to treat those sickened by the [monkeypox virus](#).

A total of 40,000 doses of the vaccine—enough to provide the two required doses to the 20,000 people authorities expect to seek vaccination—and 500 units of the antiviral would be made available to the public once the purchase was complete.

The statement said that it was "not yet possible to determine the delivery date" for the vaccine in Switzerland.

In addition, the government said the army would procure 60,000 jab doses and another 500 antiviral treatments to ensure a contingency stock that could be used in the case of outbreaks of monkeypox's far more deadly cousin smallpox, which has been eradicated but exists in laboratories.

The total cost for the vaccine, the antiviral drug and the distribution

would tick in at around 8.6 million Swiss francs (\$8.9 million), the statement said.

It said men who have sex with men, who make up the vast majority of the nearly 43,000 cases worldwide, should be prioritised for vaccination, as should [transgender people](#) who regularly change [sexual partners](#).

Health workers who might be exposed to the virus through work, and those who have been in contact with people infected with monkeypox should also get the jabs, it said.

The Swiss AIDS Federation hailed Wednesday's announcement, insisting in a statement that to rein in the outbreak, "it is vital to vaccinate as many potentially exposed people as possible."

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