

Pfizer stops China vaccine sales as import license expires

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Pfizer has stopped selling its Prevnar 7 pneumonia vaccine in China after its import license expired, but the U.S. drugmaker still intends to launch the world's most widely used vaccine, Prevnar 13, in that market.

The world's second-biggest drugmaker by revenue said that it stopped sales immediately, a decision that affected about 200 of Pfizer's 9,000 employees in China. Pfizer said the jobs for those employees will be eliminated, but they will be encouraged to seek other work with the company in China.

Prevnar 7 protects against seven strains of pneumococcal disease, the most common bacterial cause of pneumonia and a top cause of death and hospitalization worldwide. The bacteria also cause children's ear infections and other illnesses. The [vaccine](#) is labeled Prevenar in China and other countries.

Pfizer Inc. said Wednesday that it will work with regulators to speed the availability in China of Prevnar 13, which aims to replace Prevnar 7 and offers protection against 13 strains.

Pfizer executives have highlighted Prevenar sales as a factor behind the company's growth in emerging markets like China.

Prevnar 13 is the world's most widely used vaccine against pneumococcal infections, with more than 750 million doses distributed worldwide. It's also the most lucrative vaccine in history, generating \$4.5

billion in sales last year. It's the No. 2 product for Pfizer, which also makes the erectile dysfunction treatment Viagra and Lyrica for fibromyalgia and other pain.

A company spokeswoman declined to say whether Pfizer Inc. has set a launch date for Prevnar 13 in China. That version of the vaccine is already approved in 120 countries.

Shares of New York-based Pfizer Inc. rose 6 cents to \$34.39 in Thursday morning trading, while broader trading indexes also rose slightly.

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