

UK signs up for Sanofi-GSK coronavirus vaccine

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The global race is on to find a vaccine against COVID-19

Pharma giants Sanofi and GSK said Wednesday they have agreed to supply Britain with up to 60 million doses of a potential COVID-19 vaccine.

The agreement covers a [vaccine candidate](#) developed by France's Sanofi in partnership with the UK's GSK and is subject to a "final contract".

Amid a global race to find a vaccine to halt the pandemic, Sanofi announced "ongoing discussions with the European Commission, with France and Italy on the negotiation team, and other governments to ensure global access to a novel coronavirus vaccine."

Both companies voiced in a statement their commitment "to making their COVID-19 vaccine candidate affordable and available globally".

The vaccine candidate "has the potential to play a significant role in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic, both in the UK and around the world," said GSK Vaccines President Roger Connor.

Sanofi predicted regulatory approval for the vaccine "could be achieved by the first half of 2021".

UK Business Secretary Alok Sharma, quoted in the statement, hailed the progress but noted "the fact remains that there are no guarantees".

"In the meantime, it is important that we secure early access to a diverse range of promising vaccine candidates, like GSK and Sanofi, to increase our chances of finding one that works so we can protect the public and save lives."

Britain has already secured access to 90 million doses of potential coronavirus vaccines in deals with biotech firms BioNTech, Pfizer and Valneva.

The deals involve 30 million doses of a vaccine being developed by US pharma giant Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech, and 60 million doses of another created by France's Valneva.

The government in London has also said it would purchase 100 million doses of a vaccine currently being trialed by Oxford University in partnership with AstraZeneca.

"This diversity of vaccine types is important because we do not yet know which, if any, of the different types of vaccine will prove to generate a safe and protective response to COVID-19," Kate Bingham, chairwoman of the British government's [vaccine](#) taskforce, was quoted as saying.

Britain has been one of the worst affected countries in the world since the outbreak began, with more than 45,750 deaths.

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