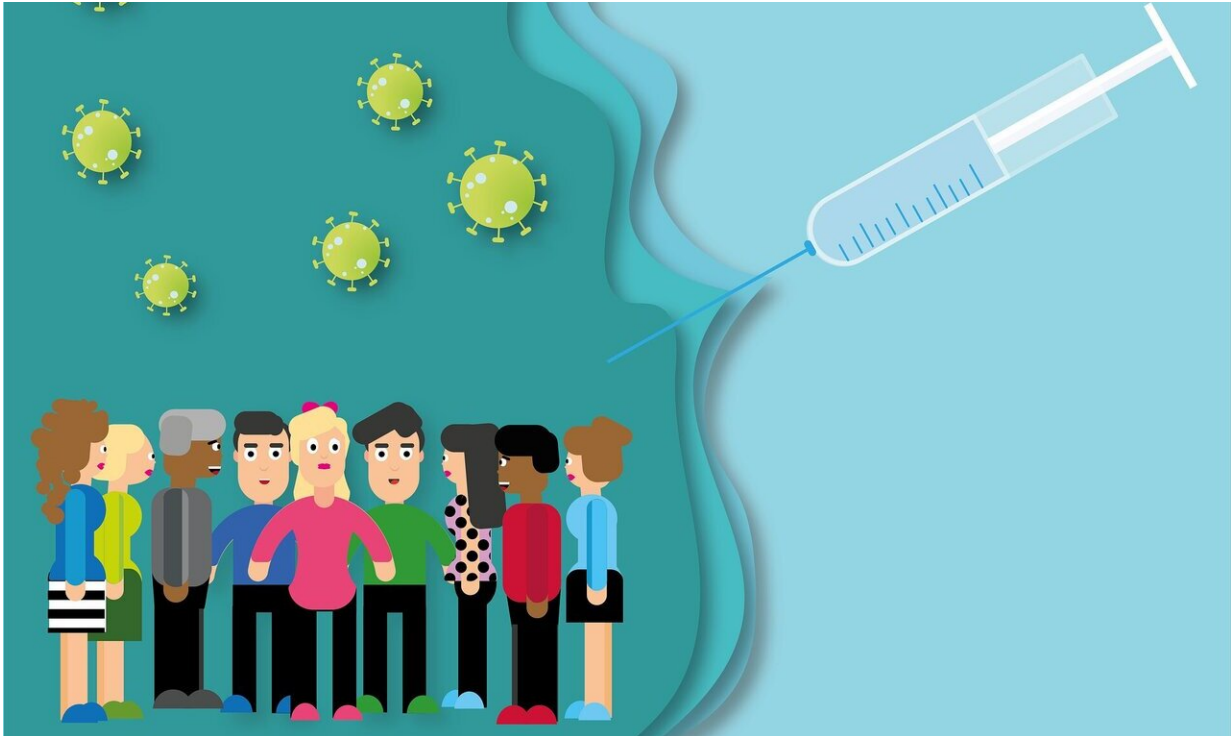


# Israel begins coronavirus vaccine trials

November 1 2020

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Israel began clinical trials of a novel coronavirus vaccine on Sunday, authorities said, as the government loosens a second lockdown imposed to stem soaring infections.

"We can see the light at the end of the tunnel," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told reporters at Sheba Medical Center near Tel Aviv.

Early in the pandemic, Netanyahu tasked the Israel Institute for Biological Research (IIBR) with developing a vaccine against the virus.

Two volunteers, one at Sheba and another at Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem, received the vaccine on Sunday.

One of the two, 34-year-old Aner Ottolenghi encouraged as many healthy people as possible to volunteer, according to a statement from Hadassah.

Israel will first test the vaccine on 80 people, before extending it to 980 in the second phase, and then 25,000 in the final stage, slated for April or May.

The Israeli trial is one of around 40 "vaccine candidates" being tested worldwide, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Ten are at the most [advanced stage](#), where effectiveness is measured on a large scale on tens of thousands of volunteers.

The trial start in Israel coincided with a reduction in lockdown restrictions.

After a peak of more than 10,000 cases per day in September—then the highest infection rate per capita in the world—the number of cases in Israel has fallen below a thousand a day, according to official data.

COVID-19 has killed over 2,541 people in Israel out of a total of 314,000 confirmed cases, official figures show.

On Sunday, primary school children were allowed to return to class.

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