

German factory races to churn out COVID-19 syringes

December 20 2020, by Jean-Philippe Lacour



One German factory is already busily churning out the little plastic tubes and is confident global needs can be met

The battle against COVID-19 has delivered not just a vaccine at record speed but also a spike in demand for the billions of syringes needed to

administer it.

One German factory is already busily churning out the little plastic tubes and is confident global needs can be met.

"There won't be a shortage of syringes, even if we are facing a big challenge," said Otto-Philipp Braun, co-director of Almo, Germany's leading [syringe](#) manufacturer.

At the company's production site in the central German town of Bad Arolsen, the loud hum of machinery fills the hall.

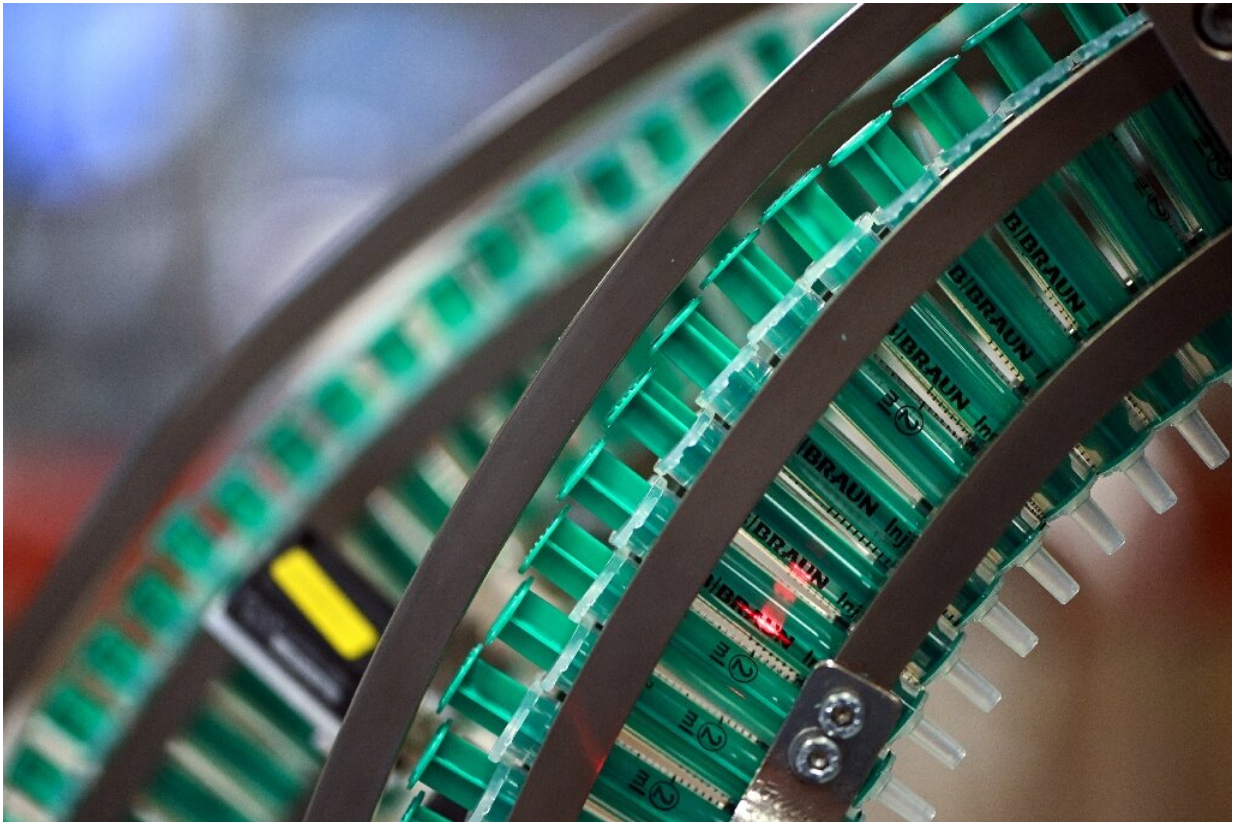
Employees man the assembly lines, wearing masks, hair nets and occasionally ear plugs.

They churn out disposable syringes 24 hours a day, seven days a week, destined for use in Germany and more than 140 other countries around the world.

One machine moulds high-quality plastic granules into thin, one-millilitre syringes, while another spits out the pistons that fit snugly inside the cylinder and are needed to push out the vaccine.

The plastic piston is green, matching the logo of German parent company B.Braun, a giant in the medical devices industry and still owned by the Braun family.

A total of 64 syringes with pistons are assembled every 13 seconds.



The factory churns out disposable syringes 24 hours a day, seven days a week, destined for use around the world



The first orders have already rolled in from Germany's BioNTech, whose vaccine was developed with US giant Pfizer

Every year, Almo churns out more than two billion syringes of various kinds.

The needles that can be added to the injection devices are produced by a B.Braun subsidiary in Malaysia.

The company intends to spend 30 million euros on an additional assembly line, partly to cope with increased demand for the COVID-19 jabs.

The first orders have already rolled in from Germany's BioNTech,

whose vaccine developed with US giant Pfizer is already being administered in some countries, and from CureVac, another German company whose vaccine candidate is in final stage trials.

"We can produce 270 million syringes of one millilitre next year, and if necessary an extra 200 million from 2022," Braun told AFP.

Taking into account larger-size syringes that are also used for [vaccine](#) injections, Almo has orders for some 500 million units for 2020 and 2021.

Its main rival, US behemoth Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD), earlier this week said it had received orders for more than a billion injection devices globally as part of COVID-19 inoculation efforts.

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Citation: German factory races to churn out COVID-19 syringes (2020, December 20) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

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