

Don't panic, you'll get vaccine, says WHO

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Nobody should panic about getting access to a COVID-19 vaccine because everyone who wants one will get one, the World Health Organization said Wednesday.

The WHO's assistant director-general Mariangela Simao said the UN

health agency was working towards ensuring access to [coronavirus](#) jabs all around the world.

"No one needs to panic, because you're going to get a [vaccine](#)," said Simao, the assistant DG for access to medicines, vaccines and pharmaceuticals.

"We've been working very hard to ensure that all countries, all populations, do have the opportunity to access these vaccines," she told a WHO [social media](#) live event.

Simao said that around 50 countries have started vaccination campaigns, with more than 40 of them being high-income states.

The WHO co-led Covax facility, a globally-pooled vaccine procurement and distribution effort, has struck agreements with five manufacturers for two billion [vaccine doses](#).

It aims to secure vaccines for 20 percent of the population in each participating country by the end of the year, with funding covered for the 92 lower- and lower-middle income economies involved.

"We are expecting to have the first doses reaching countries end of February," Simao said.

Nasal vaccine?

According to the WHO's overview of candidate vaccines, 64 have been tested on humans, 22 of which have reached final-stage mass testing.

A further 173 candidate vaccines are being developed in laboratories with a view to eventual human trials.

WHO chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan welcomed the "really incredible" range, saying it was important to have a variety of vaccines with different properties.

So far, the WHO has only approved emergency use validation for the two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which requires ultra-cold storage.

"That's a problem in many countries," said Swaminathan.

She said there were vaccines in development that only require a single injection; a nasally-inhaled vaccine; and versions which will be much more affordable than those already in use.

"There may be many vaccines that have advantages over the first generation," Swaminathan said.

"What we want to see is prevention of disease. Prevention of [infection](#) is another question. But that is secondary," she added..

"We will learn about how effective this vaccine is in actually preventing the spread of infection from person to person. Some vaccines produce sterilising immunity: they stop infection, they prevent disease.

"Some vaccines do not stop infection but prevent disease. At this point of time we're still waiting to see the results of the studies to know which of the COVID vaccines are actually going to prevent infection successfully. Hopefully they should."

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