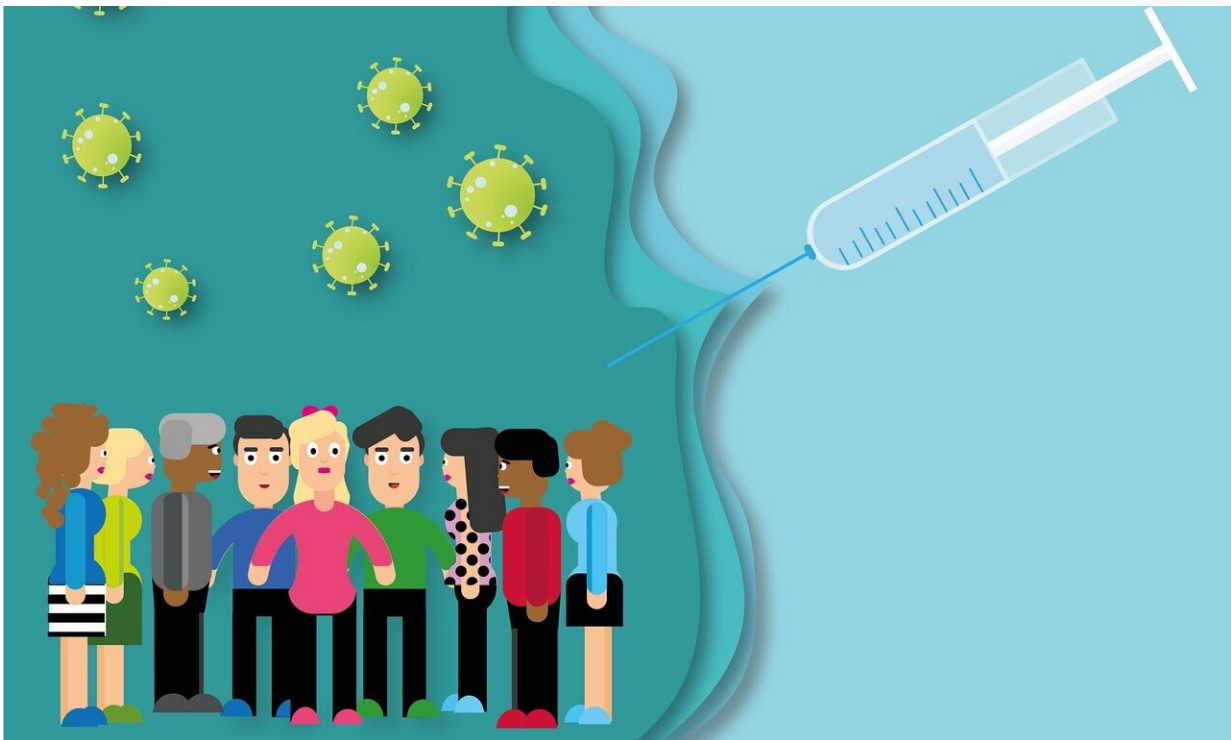


Pharma industry says stick to Covid vaccine jab schedule

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The pharmaceutical industry on Wednesday urged countries to stick to the stated gap between COVID-19 vaccine doses and said any delay to the second injection should be based on science.

Some countries are putting back the second jab of vaccines that require

two doses in order to maximise the number of people given some degree of protection through a first injection.

But in a joint statement by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), the US and European federations and others, the industry said it supported adhering to the dosing studied in clinical trials.

They also said that sticking to the science would help combat scepticism over COVID-19 vaccines, and ultimately end the [coronavirus](#) crisis.

"The biopharmaceutical industry acknowledges the considerable challenges governments are facing to urgently address the enormous strain the pandemic is placing on healthcare systems, societies and economies," the joint statement said.

"In light of the urgent need to reach as many people as possible with COVID-19 vaccines, there are emerging discussions regarding dosing strategies that may not be supported by the authorised labelling or published clinical data.

"The biopharmaceutical industry supports adhering to the dosing that has been assessed in [clinical trials](#)."

Public confidence

Faced with limited supplies of the vaccines, Denmark is spacing out the jabs by up to six weeks, while Britain has said it could wait up to 12 weeks before giving the second jab.

Germany too is mulling pushing back the second shot to beyond the standard 21 days.

The statement urged that any changes from the tested and approved vaccine dosing schedules "should follow the science and be based on a transparent deliberation of the available data".

The statement said it was vital to build [public confidence](#) in COVID-19 vaccination by making [policy decisions](#) based on robust scientific evidence.

"Only then can we bring this pandemic to an end," it said.

The joint statement was issued by the Geneva-based IFPMA; the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America; the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations; Vaccines Europe; the Biotechnology Innovation Organization; and the International Council of Biotechnology Associations.

WHO exception

The World Health Organization has given emergency use validation to the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The WHO's vaccine advisory group last week recommended sticking to the 21-28 day interval between doses of the Pfizer jab, but said the second injection could be delayed to 42 days—the outer limit observed in the vaccine's trials.

"Countries experiencing exceptional epidemiological circumstances may consider delaying for a short period the administration of the second dose as a pragmatic approach to maximising the number of individuals benefiting from a first dose while [vaccine](#) supply continues to increase," it said.

According to the WHO's overview of candidate vaccines, 63 have been

tested on humans, 21 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.

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