

Spain suspends use of AstraZeneca vaccine: minister

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Spain is suspending the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine for at least a fortnight, the health minister said Monday, the latest European country to do so over blood clot fears.

"We have decided to temporarily suspend (use of the AstraZeneca vaccine) as a precaution for at least the next two weeks," Health Minister

Carolina Darias told reporters just hours after Germany, France and Italy announced similar moves.

She said the decision would remain in place until the European Medicines Agency (EMA) "analyses the recent incidences of blood clots, notably over the weekend".

On Friday, at least five Spanish regions had said they were suspending use of a suspect batch of the vaccine as a precautionary measure.

The Amsterdam-based regulator has said it believes the British-Swedish vaccine is safe to use but will hold a special meeting on Thursday to decide on "further actions" over the jab.

Earlier on Monday, Marco Cavaleri, head of EMA's vaccines strategy, said the agency was "scrutinising all the data, particularly the fatal cases that have been reported".

The EMA said the suspected side effects included [blood clots](#), and in some cases "unusual features" such as low numbers of platelets—[blood cells](#) that aid clotting.

But it said such side effects had only occurred in "a very small number of people who received the [vaccine](#)."

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