

# Nepal's elderly get second COVID-19 vaccine shots after months-long wait

August 9 2021

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Nepal on Monday rolled out second COVID-19 vaccine jabs for nearly 1.4 million elderly people, following a months-long delay after neighbouring India halted exports over a massive surge in infections.

People aged over 65 became eligible from March to receive their first AstraZeneca-Oxford shots from India, but were unable to get their second dose after the stock ran out.

The vaccination drive was later opened in stages to everyone above 18 using 1.6 million Sinopharm shots donated by China and 1.5 million single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccines sent by the United States via the international Covax programme.

The [government](#) has not allowed vaccine shots to be mixed.

After an international appeal by the government for vaccines, Japan donated 1.6 million AstraZeneca shots and neighbouring Bhutan sent another 230,000.

"Those who were waiting for the second dose of [vaccine](#) after getting the first jab of (Indian-made AstraZeneca shot) Covishield in March will be administered from today," the head of the government's National Health Emergency Operation Center, Samir Kumar Adhikari, told AFP.

Senior citizens, some holding walking sticks and others helped by relatives, lined up at centres as they held government vaccination cards certifying their first dose.

Panna Das Shrestha, 72, said after receiving his second jab that he was relieved.

"We were very worried and were wondering what we should do. But luckily, in time, we got it," Shrestha told AFP.

The nation of 30 million people launched its inoculation programme in January with health and other frontline workers using one million Covishield doses donated by India.

It bought another two million Covishield shots, but only half arrived before India suspended its exports.

Covax, which had allocated nearly two million Covishield doses to Nepal, has so far delivered only 348,000.

China has pledged to donate more shots. The government also has a deal to buy shots from Beijing, but the figures have not been released.

Nepal, which is emerging from a devastating second wave of infections that overwhelmed hospitals and caused oxygen and medicine shortages, has reported more than 710,000 infections and over 10,000 deaths so far.

© 2021 AFP

Citation: Nepal's elderly get second COVID-19 vaccine shots after months-long wait (2021, August 9) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-08-nepal-elderly-covid-vaccine-shots.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.