

Putin tests experimental nasal vaccine against COVID-19

November 24 2021, by Daria Litvinova



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Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday he has taken an experimental nasal vaccine against the coronavirus, three days after he received his booster shot, as Russia faces its worst surge of infections

and deaths since the pandemic began.

Putin was vaccinated with Sputnik V, Russia's domestically developed COVID-19 [vaccine](#), in the spring. On Sunday, he said he received a booster short of Sputnik Light, the one-dose version of the jab, and said he wanted to take part in testing the nasal version of Sputnik V.

Denis Logunov, deputy director of Russia's state-funded Gamaleya Center that developed Sputnik V, told Putin on Sunday the nasal vaccine is yet to be tested on members of the public and is currently being studied "off-label mostly, as usual, we're testing it on staff members, monitoring."

In accordance with established scientific protocols, the vaccine will need to go through several trial phases, including those involving thousands of people, to establish that it is safe and effective to use.

Putin told a government meeting Wednesday that "exactly six months after vaccination my titers of protective (antibodies) have dropped, and specialists recommended the procedure of revaccination, which I did."

He said he didn't experience any unpleasant effects after taking the nasal vaccine.

In recent weeks, Russia has been swept by its highest ever COVID-19 surge, with officials regularly registering record-high numbers of new infections and deaths.

The surge came amid low vaccination rates and lax public attitudes toward taking precautions. Fewer than 40% of Russia's nearly 146 million people have been fully vaccinated, even though the country approved a domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine months before most of the world.

Russia's state coronavirus task force reported 33,558 new infections on Wednesday and 1,240 deaths. In total, the task force has reported over 9.4 million confirmed infections and more than 267,000 COVID-19 deaths, by far the highest [death](#) toll in Europe. Some experts believe the true figure is even higher.

Reports by Russia's statistical service, Rosstat, that tally coronavirus-linked deaths retroactively, reveal much higher mortality. They say 462,000 people with COVID-19 died between April 2020 and September of this year.

Russian officials have said the [task force](#) only includes deaths for which COVID-19 was the main cause, and uses data from medical facilities. Rosstat uses wider criteria for counting virus-related deaths and takes its numbers from civil registry offices where registering a death is finalized.

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