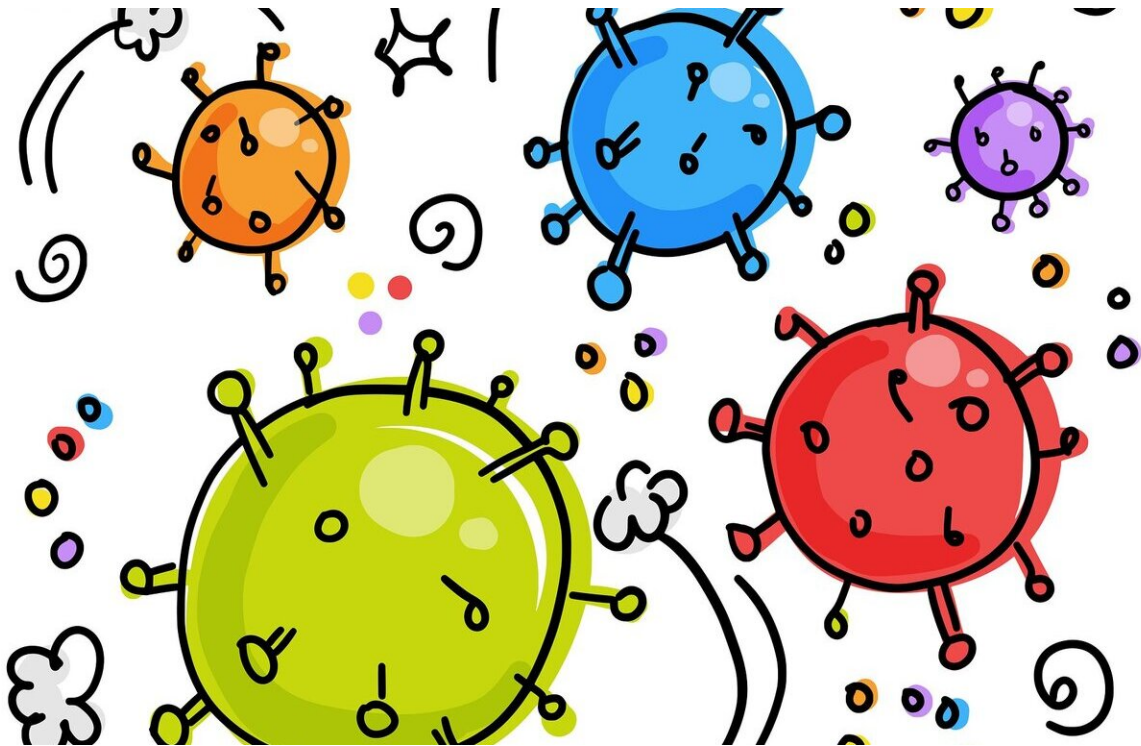


EU agency to decide on Novavax Covid jab next week

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The EU's drug regulator said on Thursday it would decide whether the Novavax coronavirus jab will become the fifth vaccine approved for the bloc at a meeting next Monday.

The US firm's shot uses a more traditional technology than current

vaccines, which experts hope could ease hesitancy and scepticism among the unvaccinated.

"Our human medicines committee will hold an extraordinary meeting on 20 Dec to review the application for the COVID-19 [vaccine](#) developed by Novavax," the European Medicines Agency said on Twitter on Thursday.

"We will communicate the outcome of this scientific discussion."

Novavax's so-called [protein](#) subunit technology is similar to that used in the decades-old Hepatitis B and whooping cough vaccines that are widely used around the world.

The other four vaccines currently in use in the EU employ far newer technology.

Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna both use pioneering mRNA (Messenger RNA) technology that teaches the body's cells to make a harmless piece of protein found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19.

This prompts the [immune system](#) to develop antibodies that can fight off the real thing in case of infection.

The more conventional, but still relatively new viral vector approach used by AstraZeneca and J&J uses a genetically engineered version of the common cold adenovirus as a "vector" to shuttle genetic instructions into human cells.

The Novavax jab instead contains tiny particles made from a version of a protein found on the surface of the coronavirus spike protein, made in a laboratory.

The fact that it uses this tried-and-tested [technology](#) has raised hopes that it could reduce the vaccine hesitancy that still dogs the newer methods used in many current vaccines.

Novavax missed the first wave of vaccines because of what European officials called production problems.

Novavax, a company based in the US state of Maryland, says its vaccine has 90 percent efficacy against COVID-19, based on a North American study.

The European Commission said in August it has signed a preliminary deal to buy up to 200 million doses of the Novavax vaccine.

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