

Novavax becomes Australia's 5th approved COVID-19 vaccine

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In this Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2020, file photo, a vial of the Phase 3 Novavax coronavirus vaccine is seen ready for use in the trial at St. George's University hospital in London. The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine has become the fifth coronavirus vaccine approved for use in Australia, Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022. The country has ordered 51 million doses of the U.S.-manufactured vaccine, supplied under the brand Nuvaxovid, for its population of 26 million. Credit: AP Photo/Alastair Grant, File

Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday became the fifth coronavirus vaccine approved for use in Australia.

The country has ordered 51 million doses of the U.S.-manufactured [vaccine](#), supplied under the brand Nuvaxovid, for its population of 26 million. Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccines are already in use in Australia. Johnson and Johnson's Janssen vaccine is also approved but the government has not bought any.

The Novavax vaccine will be available to unvaccinated Australians aged 18 years and older but will not be used as a booster for the 95% of the population aged 16 and older who have already received a vaccine.

"There are some individuals, notwithstanding a massive take up of vaccination in this country, who have been waiting for Novavax, and it's great that it's finally been approved," said chief regulator John Skerritt, head of the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

"Our dream is we might turn our 95% into a 97 or 98% in this country," Skerritt added.

The protein-based vaccine is to be administered in two doses three weeks apart.

Paul Griffin, associate professor of medicine at Queensland University, said Australia needed to strive to improve an already impressive vaccination rate.

"For a variety of reasons, it seems some have remained reluctant to receive these vaccines thus far so an additional option, based on what is considered perhaps a more traditional platform, is likely to increase our vaccination rate even further," Griffin said.

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