

Cambodia vaccinating ages 3-4 to fight omicron outbreak

February 23 2022, by Sopheng Cheang



A young girl held by her mother pushes a shaft of a needle as she receives a first dose of Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine at a health center outside Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022. Cambodia began vaccinating 3- and 4-year-olds with Chinese-made Sinovac shots Wednesday after finding young children accounting for many new infections. Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed for parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as they can. Credit: AP Photo/Heng Sinith

Cambodia began vaccinating 3- and 4-year-olds with Chinese-made Sinovac shots Wednesday after finding young children accounting for many new infections.

Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed to parents to have their children vaccinated as soon as possible and said five of his 21 grandchildren and one of his daughters have tested positive for the omicron variant of the coronavirus.

"To overcome COVID-19 depends not just on the government or the Health Ministry, but needs the participation of all the people," Hun Sen said at a groundbreaking ceremony for a wastewater treatment facility on the outskirts of Phnom Penh.

He endorsed the vaccination plan for younger children last week after health officials found at least 25% of newly reported infections involved children under age 5.

After vaccinating adults and older children, Cambodia approved shots for children aged 6-11 last September as part of reopening its schools. In November, vaccinations for 5-year-olds were approved.

More than 80% of Cambodia's almost 17 million people have received at least two shots. China's Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines account for most inoculations.

A recent sharp rise in cases has driven some people in Phnom Penh to stock antiviral medication to prepare for the possibility of catching the virus.



A young girl held by her mother reacts as she receives a first dose of Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine at a health center outside Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022. Cambodia began vaccinating 3- and 4-year-olds with Chinese-made Sinovac shots Wednesday after finding young children accounting for many new infections. Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed for parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as they can. Credit: AP Photo/Heng Sinith



A young boy, center, held by his mother, receives a dose of Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine at a health center outside Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022. Cambodia began vaccinating 3- and 4-year-olds with Chinese-made Sinovac shots Wednesday after finding young children accounting for many new infections. Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed for parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as they can. Credit: AP Photo/Heng Sinith



A young boy completes a form before he receives a dose of Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine at a health center outside Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022. Cambodia began vaccinating 3- and 4-year-olds with Chinese-made Sinovac shots Wednesday after finding young children accounting for many new infections. Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed for parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as they can. Credit: AP Photo/Heng Sinith



Villagers fill in their forms before receiving a dose of the Sinovac vaccine at a health center outside Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022. Cambodia began vaccinating 3- and 4-year-olds with the Chinese-made shots Wednesday after finding young children accounting for many new infections. Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed for parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as they can. Credit: AP Photo/Heng Sinith



A family fill a form before receiving a first dose of the Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine at a health center outside Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022. Cambodia began vaccinating 3- and 4-year-olds with the Chinese-made shots Wednesday after finding young children accounting for many new infections. Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed for parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as they can. Credit: AP Photo/Heng Sinith



A man walks with his child after his son received a first dose of the Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine at a health center outside Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022. Cambodia began vaccinating 3- and 4-year-olds with the Chinese-made shots Wednesday after finding young children accounting for many new infections. Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed for parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as they can. Credit: AP Photo/Heng Sinith



Villagers wait to receive a dose of the Sinovac vaccine at a health center outside Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022. Cambodia began vaccinating 3- and 4-year-olds with the Chinese-made shots Wednesday after finding young children accounting for many new infections. Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed for parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as they can. Credit: AP Photo/Heng Sinith

They have been purchasing Molnupiravir, which was authorized by the Health Ministry last November for home-based treatment of mild to moderate cases. Cambodia has purchased 4 million pills, suitable for treating 10,000 people. Molnupiravir was developed by the pharmaceutical company Merck in partnership with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, another U.S.-based company.

Cambodia's Health Ministry on Wednesday reported 558 new COVID-19 cases and one related death, bringing the nation's totals since the pandemic began to 128,133 cases and 3,023 deaths.

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