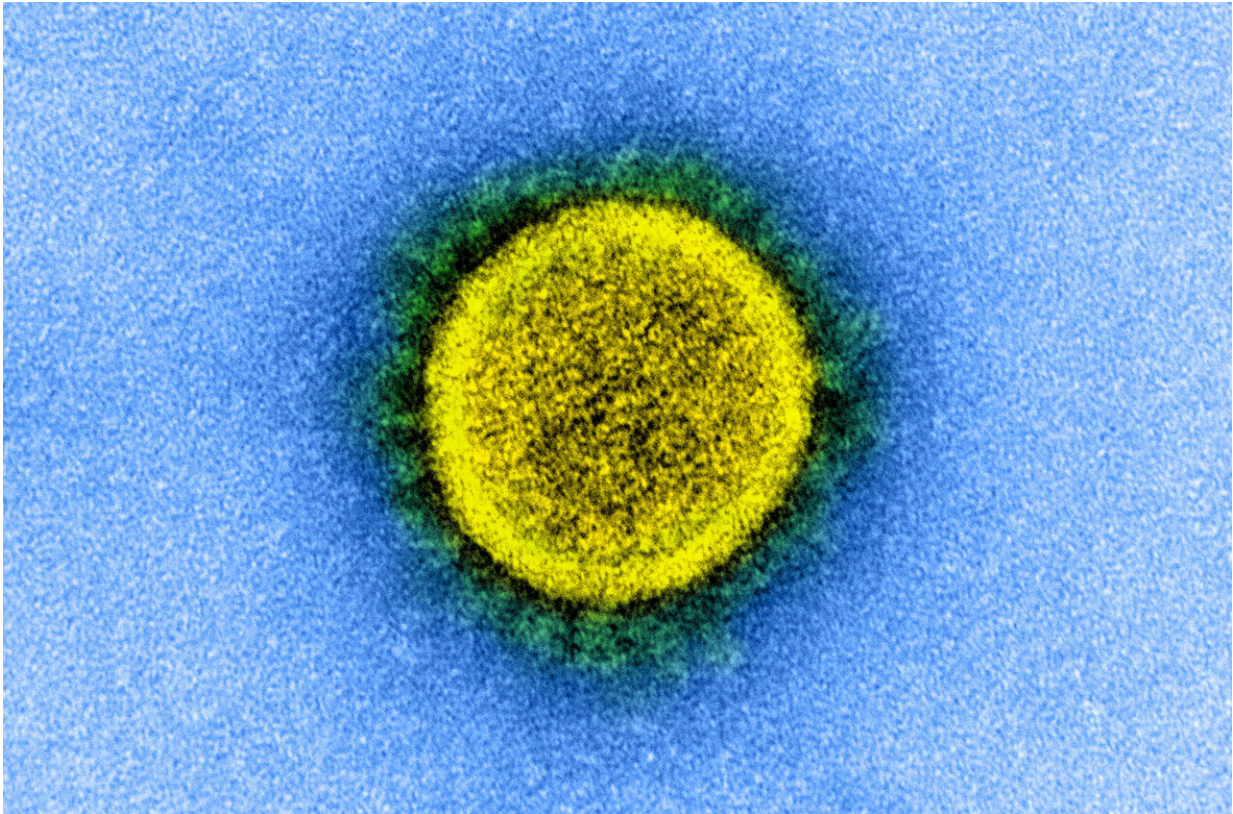


# UK approves Valneva's COVID-19 vaccine

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SARS-CoV-2 (shown here in an electron microscopy image). Credit: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, NIH

Britain has approved a new coronavirus vaccine by the Austrian-French drugmaker Valneva, the UK's health regulator said on Thursday.

"An approval has been granted after the Valneva COVID-19 vaccine was

found to meet the required safety, quality and effectiveness standards," the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency said in a statement.

Last month, Valneva's COVID-19 vaccine—which uses the traditional technology of inactivated virus—received its first approval with an emergency authorisation for use in Bahrain.

Valneva had committed to supplying the Gulf kingdom with one million doses in an advance purchase agreement last year.

The Austrian-French firm had also signed an agreement with the European Commission over the supply of up to 60 million doses in 2022 and 2023.

Valneva CEO Thomas Lingelbach said that "this authorisation could pave the way for the availability of an alternative vaccine solution for the UK population."

It "could also lead to additional marketing authorisations in other regions of the world," he said in a statement.

Valneva is the sixth coronavirus vaccine to be approved in the UK, after AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna, Janssen (Johnson & Johnson), and Novavax.

"The independent Commission on Human Medicines and its COVID-19 Expert Working Group has carefully considered the available evidence (and) the benefit risk balance is positive," the commission's president, Munir Pirmohamed, said in the statement.

The vaccine is approved for use in people aged 18-50 with the two doses to be taken at an interval of at least 28 days.

The vaccine can be stored at fridge temperature, meaning it can be used in countries where storage at very low temperatures is not available.

Britain was one of the countries hardest hit by the global coronavirus pandemic, where it killed more than 171,000 people.

More than 92 percent of the population aged 12 or over has had a vaccine dose, 86 percent a second dose and 68 percent a booster.

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