

Trudeau expects most of Canada to be vaccinated by September

27 November 2020, by Rob Gillies



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau listens to a question from a reporter during a bi-weekly news conference outside Rideau cottage in Ottawa, Ontario, Friday, Nov. 27, 2020. (Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press via AP)

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Friday he expects more than half of Canadians to receive a COVID-19 vaccine by next September after he came under criticism for saying Canadians won't be among the first to get doses.

Trudeau said earlier this week Canada will have to wait for a vaccine because the first ones are likely to be given to citizens of the countries they are made in. He noted the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany have mass vaccine-production facilities but Canada does not.

Opposition parties criticized Trudeau for not ensuring Canadians get priority access to vaccines.

Trudeau said Friday he expects vaccines to start arriving early next year—but what month Canadians will get the first doses remains an open question.

"The race to get to the starting line first, I can understand, but this pandemic doesn't get over until we reached the finish line," Trudeau said.

"What really matters is when we get to cross the finish line and the fact that the doctors highlighted that if all goes according to plan, we should be able to have a majority of Canadians vaccinated by next September, puts us in a very good stead."

Dr. Howard Njoo, Canada's deputy chief medical officer, said it would be by the end of next year but said Trudeau's timeline "is in the same ballpark."



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau closes the door as he steps out of Rideau cottage for a bi-weekly news conference on the Covid-19 pandemic in Ottawa, Ontario, Friday, Nov. 27, 2020. (Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press via AP)

Top Canadian health officials said Thursday Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine candidate could be approved in Canada next month and if all goes according to plan 3 million Canadians could get shots by the end of March. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is meeting Dec. 10 to consider whether to give the go-ahead to Pfizer.

Canada has a purchase deal to buy at least 20 million doses of Pfizer's vaccine.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford hopes to get the first doses in January.

"I can't emphasize enough with the prime minister that the clock is ticking," Ford said.

Toronto is on lockdown and the country's largest province of Ontario reported a record 1,855 cases on Friday.

"We're in for some of the toughest days of this pandemic," Trudeau said.

Trudeau said Canada, which has a population of 37 million, has signed deals that could give Canada the most per capita vaccines in the world. And he said the Canadian military will play a role in distribution of the [vaccine](#). An army general will oversee it.

"This will be the biggest immunization in the history of the country," Trudeau said.

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