

Norway, Denmark reserve AstraZeneca vaccine for under-65s

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Norwegian and Danish health authorities said Thursday they will limit use of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine to those under age 65, citing a lack of data on its efficacy for the elderly.

The two Nordic nations followed in the footsteps of several others in the European Union, of which Norway is not a member but to which it is closely linked, including for the procurement of COVID vaccines negotiated by Brussels.

The head of Norway's public health agency FHI, Camilla Stoltenberg, told reporters the decision was made "not because the [vaccine](#) doesn't work for the elderly, but because the documentation is so limited".

Health authorities in Germany, France and Sweden have also recommended the jab only be used on under-65s.

In Norway and Denmark, exemptions will also be made for under-65s with underlying [health conditions](#) and at risk of developing severe cases of COVID-19. They will continue to receive the vaccines made by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna.

For others who will receive the AstraZeneca inoculation, the two doses will be administered between nine and 12 weeks apart in Norway, and four to 12 weeks apart in Denmark.

"We see that a longer interval between the doses provides better protection," said Sara Watle, a doctor at Norway's FHI.

Norway, a country of 5.4 million, has one of Europe's lowest COVID incidence rates, according to EU disease agency ECDC.

So far, at least 135,000 people in Norway have received a first vaccine dose and more than 30,000 a second dose, and the country hopes to have vaccinated most of its [adult population](#) by summer.

In Denmark, the EU country with the second-highest vaccination rate after Malta, 1.68 percent of its 5.8 million inhabitants have received two doses and 3.28 percent have received a first dose. The country hopes to have vaccinated all adults by July 4.

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