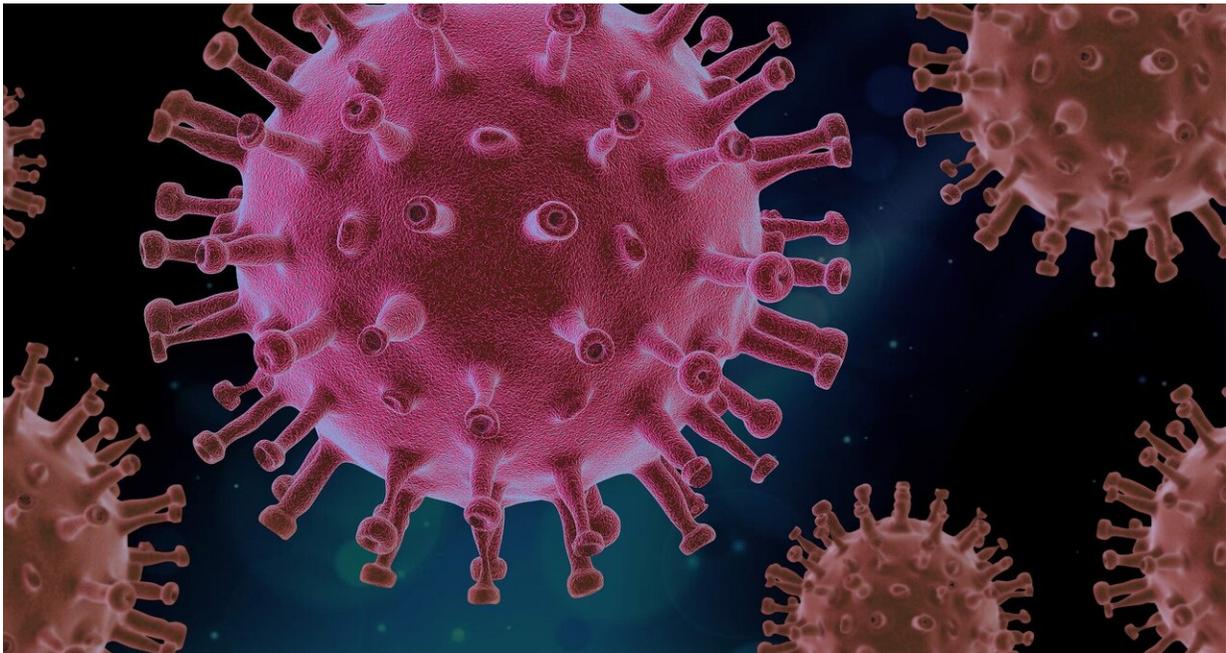


Brazil green-lights Pfizer vaccine for kids 12 and up

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Brazil's health regulator approved the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine Friday for use in children aged 12 and up, though they will likely have to wait months in line for older age groups to be vaccinated first.

Hit hard by the pandemic, Brazil joins countries including the United States, Uruguay and Chile in extending vaccination to minors.

However, supply issues mean the move is mainly symbolic for now.

Brazil's COVID-19 vaccination drive, which began in January, has been hit by shortages and delays.

Around 11 percent of the country's 212 million people have been fully vaccinated so far.

Cities such as Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro have only recently finished vaccinating priority groups such as [health workers](#) and the elderly.

They are now vaccinating the [general population](#) in descending order by age, and are currently immunizing people in their 50s.

The health regulator, Anvisa, said the approval was based on studies by Pfizer that "indicated the vaccine's safety and effectiveness for this age group."

In addition to the US pharmaceutical giant's vaccine, developed with German firm BioNTech, Brazil is currently using the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine and Chinese-developed CoronaVac.

Regulators have also approved the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, but the government has not yet reached a deal to purchase it.

Brazil has struggled to source enough vaccine doses.

Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro faces criticism for refusing offers of vaccines last year, including from Pfizer, and instead pushing the ineffective medication chloroquine against COVID-19.

The pandemic has claimed more than 480,000 lives in Brazil, second only to the United States.

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