

US drug maker Moderna opening vaccine plant in Canada

10 August 2021

US biotech company Moderna will build a plant in Canada to produce vaccines for COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, the Canadian government and the company announced Tuesday.

Industry Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne made the announcement with the head of Moderna, saying the plant would fulfill orders for its messenger RNA vaccines, with manufacturers struggling to meet soaring demand for COVID-19 shots worldwide.

"The collaboration aims to provide Canadians with access to a domestically manufactured portfolio of mRNA vaccines against [respiratory viruses](#), including COVID-19, seasonal influenza, [respiratory syncytial virus](#) (RSV) and potential other vaccines," the company said in a statement.

"If there is a [new virus](#) emerging—a new string of Zika or Ebola or corona or flu, the Canadian government can decide to use part or all of that capacity for that specific virus to protect the Canadian people," said Champagne.

The government's financial contribution to the project was not disclosed. But the company, according to Champagne, is investing "several hundred million dollars" in the state of the art facility.

Canada currently has no domestic [vaccine](#) production, and so has depended on imports of Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and other jabs to inoculate its 38 million people against the novel coronavirus.

In May, it invested nearly Can\$200 million to expand Resilience Biotechnologies' vaccine plant in Mississauga, Ontario, and earmarked Can\$2.2 billion in its spring budget to boost its biomanufacturing and life sciences sector.

French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi and Canadian biotech firm Medicago were among the first to receive Canadian funding to develop vaccines and eventually produce shots locally too.

Moderna chief executive Stephane Bancel said its new facility would be up and running by 2024, producing initially up to 30 million vaccine doses per year.

"In the last six to nine months... dozens of countries have contacted us to build factories on their soil. The country that has been the fastest to move... has been Canada," he said.

"We anticipate to build more factories around the world using a similar model."

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APA citation: US drug maker Moderna opening vaccine plant in Canada (2021, August 10) retrieved 16 January 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-08-drug-maker-moderna-vaccine-canada.html>

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