

New Zealand secures AstraZeneca & Novavax COVID-19 vaccines

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The New Zealand Government will purchase COVID-19 vaccines from pharmaceutical companies AstraZeneca and Novavax, meaning every New Zealander will be able to be vaccinated.

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The four pre-purchase agreements secured to date are:

- 750,000 courses from Pfizer/BioNTech;
- 5 million courses from Janssen;
- 3.8 million courses from the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca; and
- 5.36 million courses from Novavax.

Considering the multiple types of vaccine technology that have been used to develop COVID-19 vaccines, New Zealand's strategy is to purchase different technology types of vaccines. This is to be prepared with alternative successful vaccine in light of possible failure in clinical trial at vaccine developmental stages.

"We now have agreements in place with four providers, covering three different types of vaccine technology and we have secured more than enough doses to cover our entire population plus the Pacific." says the authority.

New Zealand has prepared the infrastructure and storage facilities for all vaccines. The Ministry has also purchased nine large minus 80 degree Celsius freezers that can store more than 1.5 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. They are on track to arrive by the end of the year.

Preparations are well in hand to gear up for what would be New Zealand's largest ever immunisation programme on priority basis.

Medsafe's approval process

Medsafe, the New Zealand Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Authority, has agreed to allow pharmaceutical companies to make rolling applications for their COVID-19 vaccines, which means they may submit their data as it is completed and ready for assessment to speed up the process. Pfizer and BioNTech and Janssen have already started to submit data for Medsafe's approval. Medsafe is in close contact with its Australian counterpart throughout.