



AS IT IS

When Will Covid Vaccines Be Available Around the World?

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Experts say it could be 2023 or later before COVID-19 vaccines are widely available in some countries.

The United States, Israel and Britain are among the countries where more than half of the population has gotten at least one injection, or shot. But, some countries have fewer than one percent of their populations vaccinated. They include South Africa, Pakistan and Venezuela. About 10 countries — mostly in Africa — reportedly have no vaccines at all.

There are many reasons for the difference. Economic ones play an important part. But, some people say, so do intellectual property laws that cover scientific discoveries. These laws protect people's creative or scientific work from being reproduced without their permission.

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has supported **waiving** intellectual property protections for the vaccines. But it is not clear if there will be agreement on the issue. It is also unclear if such an agreement would speed production.

COVAX, a United Nations-supported project, aims to ensure that poor countries around the world are able to get vaccines. But COVAX has run behind **schedule**. The reason for the delay is partly because India, a vaccine manufacturer, has banned vaccine exports as it faces increased coronavirus infections. Some countries are also stockpiling vaccines. Stockpiling means getting and keeping a large supply of something for future use.

In April, researchers at Duke University said that, even with help from COVAX, many countries would not be able to reach a 60 percent vaccination level until 2023 or later.

Matthew Kavanagh is a global health policy expert at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Kavanagh suggested that preordering partly explains why rich countries have more vaccines.

“The U.S., European and other wealthy nations long ago preordered nearly all the doses available and now other countries, even with the money to buy, are at the back of line waiting,” Kavanagh said.

China and Russia are among the countries that have **committed** to giving vaccines to other nations. Others, including the United States and Britain, have not yet opened their stockpiles, although they have committed to doing so. However, some experts expect low vaccine supplies to continue for years to come. “There is simply not enough vaccine to go around,” Kavanagh said.

I’m John Russell.

Victoria Milko reported on this story for the Associated Press. John Russell adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

dose – *n.* the amount of a medicine, drug or vitamin that is taken at one time

waive – *v.* to officially state that you will not use or require something that is usually required by law or agreement

schedule – *n.* a plan of things that will be done that includes the times when they will be done

commit – *v.* to say that you will definitely do something; to require someone to do something
