



JANUARY 2021

INDIA ON THE CUSP OF COVID-19 VACCINATION

Introduction

We, at Prudent, bring to you insights on COVID-19 and the vaccination programme envisaged. It comprises answers to some of the most frequently asked questions related to immunity and vaccination, COVID-19 vaccination drive in India, expected process flow, salient features of vaccines, and more.

Immunity and Vaccination

What is Immunity and How does it Work?

Immunity is a biological system that protects the body from infections and diseases. The body produces antibodies to fight against toxins or disease-carrying organisms to protect the body from infection.

The Role of Vaccine:

At times, the body is not used to a specific disease or infection and, thus, cannot fight against it. This is where the role of a vaccine comes into play. A vaccine helps activate the body's immune system to protect the body from the disease in a simple and effective way. It produces an immune response in the body without causing any illness.

When you get a vaccine, your immune system responds in the following manner:

- It recognizes the invading germ, such as virus or bacteria
- It produces antibodies, i.e. proteins produced naturally by the immune system to fight diseases
- It remembers the disease and how to fight it. If you are then exposed to the germ in the future, your immune system can quickly destroy it before you become unwell



COVID-19 Vaccination Drive in India - FAQs:

When does the Vaccination Drive Begin?

India's domestic vaccination drive is to be the largest in the world. As per the Ministry of Health, COVID-19 vaccination is expected to start in India by January 2021. The Government aims to vaccinate the priority groups by the end of June 2021.

Which is the First Group to be Vaccinated?

India has planned to identify and vaccinate priority groups basis their risk exposure, such as healthcare workers, elderly (above 50 years of age) and those with co-morbid conditions (under 50 years of age but suffering from chronic ailments).

Is the Vaccination Mandatory?

No, however, it is strongly recommended that one receives the complete schedule of

COVID-19 vaccine to protect oneself against this disease and to limit the spread of this disease to close contacts including family members, friends, relatives, and co-workers.

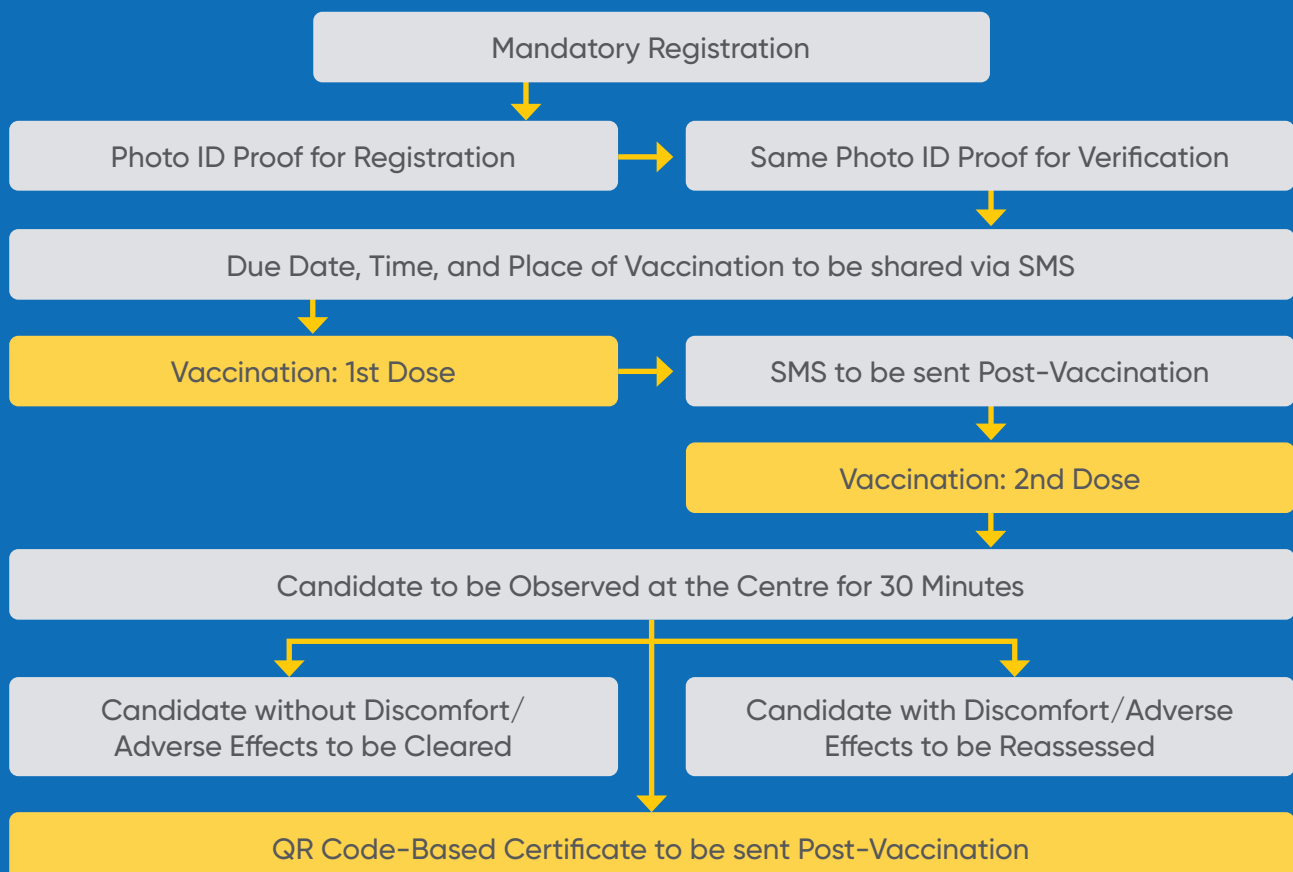
Is Vaccination Required for those with a History of COVID Infection?

Yes, it can help build a strong immune response against the disease. It is also advised that the person who has an active infection should defer getting vaccinated for 14 days and get vaccinated post this period.

Which Vaccine is Recommended?

The vaccines that are given licence would be available for vaccination. It is important to complete the recommended schedule with the same vaccine, as vaccines are not interchangeable.

Vaccination Drive: Expected Process Flow





Possible Common Side Effects:

Possible common side effects could include mild fever, nausea, or pain at the site of injection. Authorities have been asked to make necessary arrangements to deal with any COVID-19 vaccine-related side effects as one of the measures towards safe vaccine delivery to the masses.



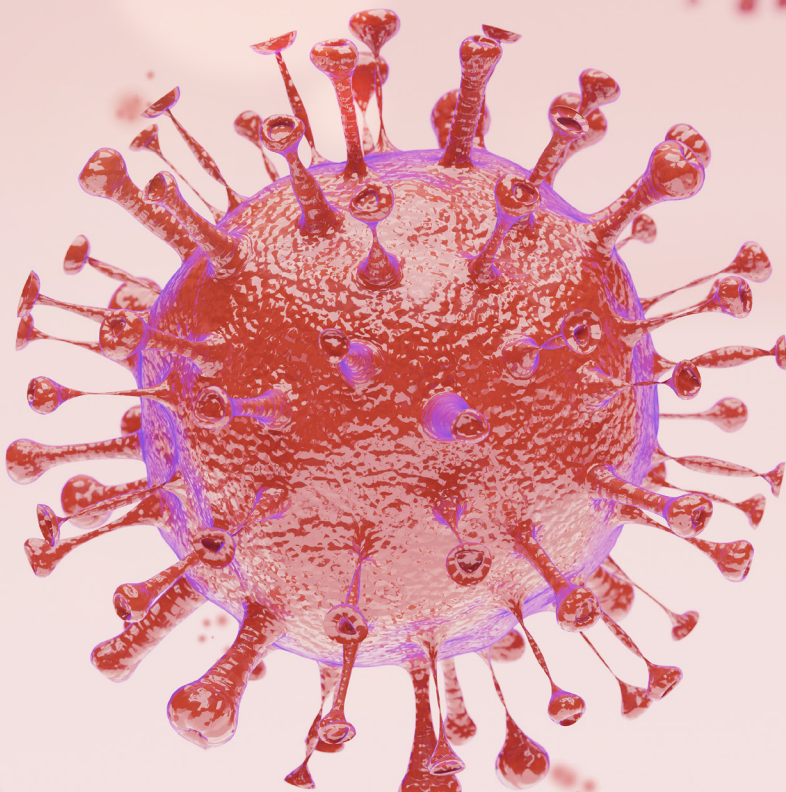
Post-Vaccination Behaviour:

Safety guidelines and COVID-appropriate behaviour like wearing of mask, social distancing, hand sanitization, and best hygiene practices to be followed.



Leading Vaccine Candidates:

India has approved 2 vaccines: Covishield and Covaxin for emergency use to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Mass vaccination is likely to begin by mid-January.



Salient Features of Covishield and Covaxin:

COVISHIELD

This vaccine is developed by the Oxford University scientists in collaboration with the pharmaceutical company, AstraZeneca. It is made by using adenovirus, which has the same genetic material as the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 (coronavirus). Spike protein is the part of SARS-CoV-2, using which, the virus enters the body cell of an infected person. In our country, the trials of Covishield were undertaken by Serum Institute of India, which is manufacturing the vaccine for mass-vaccination in our country and elsewhere.

COVAXIN

It is developed by the indigenous vaccine developer, Bharat Biotech, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Institute of Virology. It is developed using dead coronavirus, thereby referred to as an inactivated vaccine. Under inactivated form, a virus is not capable of infecting others or replicating on its own but triggers good immune response by our immune system. It is in the final stages of clinical trial and hence, there is a restricted approval provided by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI).

Vaccines: Table of Comparison

S.N.	Specifics	Covishield	Covaxin	Novavax	Sputnik
1.	Type	Viral Vector	Inactivated Virus	Protein Subunit	Viral Vector
2.	Efficacy	60-90%	Clinical Trial results not published	Clinical Trial results not published	Up to 91.4%
3.	Dosage	2, Gap of 4-6 Weeks	2, Gap of 3 Weeks	2, Gap of 3 Weeks	2, Gap of 3 Weeks
4.	Storage Temperature	2-8 degree Celsius	Normal Room Temperature	2-8 degree Celsius	2-8 degree Celsius
5.	Order	*1 Billion	NA	*1 Billion	100M-200M

Note: The prices mentioned are based on various reports published and may change when they come out in the market. All vaccines mentioned in the table are easy to store and administer.

*Order status is subject to change due to circumstances.

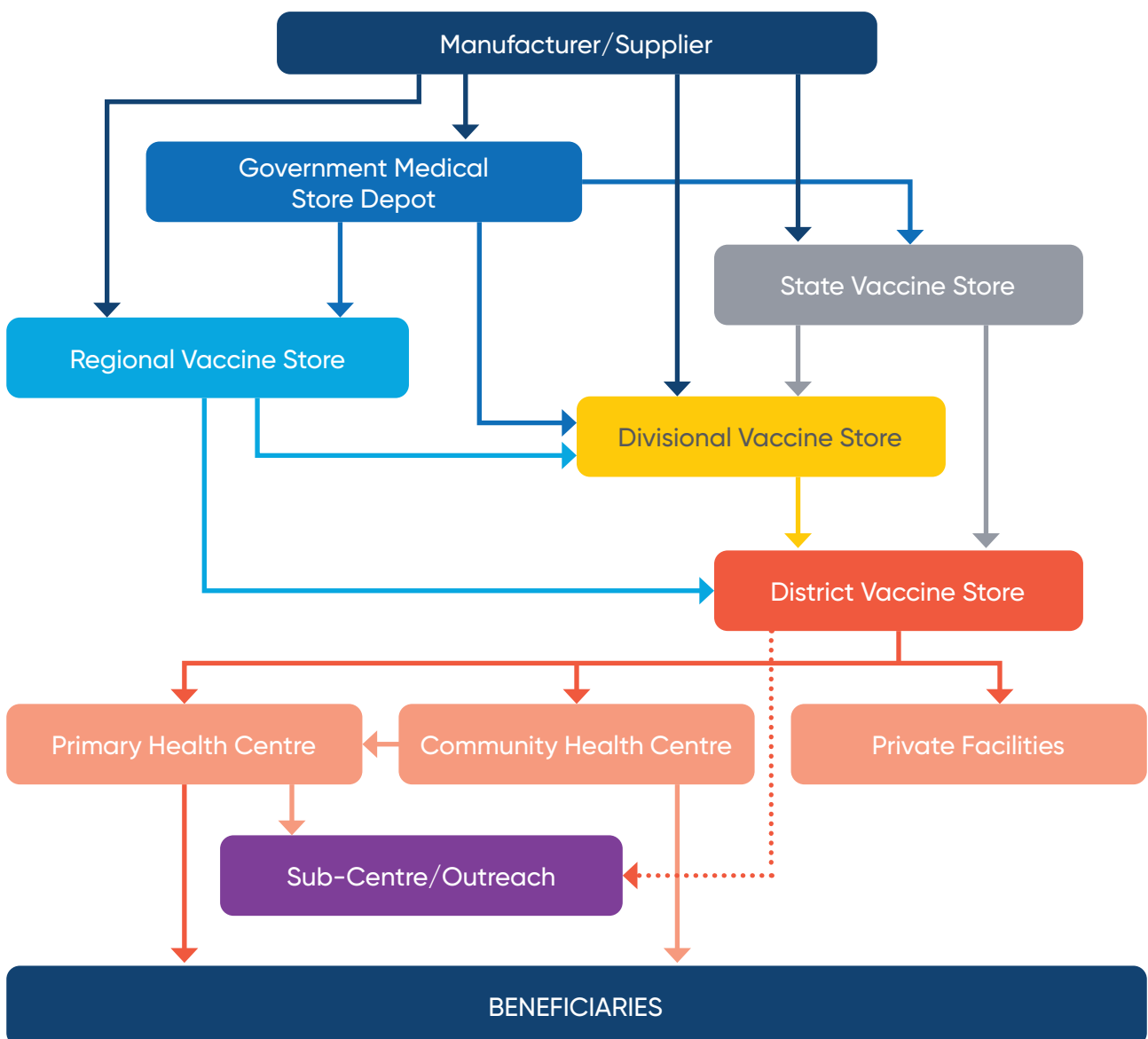
India's Vaccination Roll Out:

Transportation:

The Government of India has allowed all scheduled operators currently authorized to carry dangerous goods, to carry Coronavirus vaccines. There are guidelines issued for packaging and transportation of COVID-19 vaccines by air, directing airlines and airport authorities to ensure that vaccines are packaged in dry ice and refrigerated material in a bid to maintain low temperatures ranging between -8°C to -70°C essential for its transportation.

Distribution:

Pune to be the central hub for COVID-19 vaccine distribution procedure to take place. As many as 41 destinations across the country have been finalized for the delivery of vaccines. Among these destinations, there are four primary stores called the Government Medical Store Depot (GMSD) located in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, and Karnal (Haryana).



Advantages:

- India has the largest vaccine manufacturing capabilities. With 60% of the total vaccines manufactured in the world, vaccines produced in India are used across the world for various immunization programmes
- India runs some of the largest immunization programmes for the masses, catering to the vaccination needs of more than 26 million newborns and 29 million pregnant women. There are a few encouraging success stories to India's credit as well. The success of Polio and Cholera vaccinations with masses getting vaccinated adds to the good track record
- Programme mechanisms are being strengthened to effectively cater to the country's large and diverse population
- Another big advantage is the commitment of the Air Force to deliver the vaccine to the remotest of locations in India

Challenges:

- Authorities need to scale up cold chain, proper storage, and distribution for the last mile connectivity
- The air cargo industry must be on its feet to ensure the speedy delivery at required places
- Lack of an expert group and eVIN (Electronic Vaccination Intelligence Network) to track and manage vaccine stocks and storage adequately
- Inadequate/poor knowledge among the population could lead to recipients either forgetting to take the 2nd dose or make a mistake of taking the 3rd dose, thereby exposing themselves to unknown consequences. Aadhaar-enabled digital identification could be a possible solution to track the vaccine doses

COVID Vaccine for Private Purchase:

One of the vaccine candidates could be available for private purchase by March 2021. The number of doses could be between 2-3 million; however, there is no confirmation on the pricing.

Disclaimer: All information about the COVID-19 vaccine has been collated through secondary research and is accurate on the date this document was prepared.



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