

Pharma giants Sanofi, GSK working on COVID vaccine for 2021

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Pharma giants Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline will join forces to work on a coronavirus vaccine they hope will enter clinical trials this year, potentially making it available in the second half of 2021, the companies said Tuesday.

The vaccine will combine a Sanofi-developed antigen, which stimulates the production of germ-killing antibodies, with GSK's adjuvant technology, a substance that boosts the [immune response](#) triggered by a vaccine, they said in a statement.

"The companies plan to initiate phase I [clinical trials](#) in the second half of 2020 and, if successful, subject to regulatory considerations, aim to complete the development required for availability by the second half of 2021," they said.

"As the world faces this unprecedented global health crisis, it is clear that no one company can go it alone," added Sanofi's chief executive Paul Hudson.

Given the extraordinary humanitarian and financial toll of the pandemic, Sanofi and GSK said global

access to COVID-19 vaccines was a priority.

They said they were committed to making any vaccine developed through the collaboration "affordable to the public and through mechanisms that offer fair access for people in all countries."

Sanofi, based in Paris, said it would contribute its S-protein COVID-19 antigen, designed to exactly match proteins found on the surface of the new virus.

Britain's GlaxoSmithKline said it would add its adjuvant, an ingredient for vaccines that can create stronger and longer-lasting immunity.

"The use of an adjuvant can be of particular importance in a pandemic situation since it may reduce the amount of vaccine protein required per dose, allowing more vaccine doses to be produced and therefore contributing to protect more people," the statement said.

It can also improve the likelihood of delivering an effective vaccine that can be manufactured at scale.

Sanofi and GSK said their joint effort was supported by funding and a collaboration with the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

"The companies plan to discuss funding support with other governments and global institutions prioritising global access," they added.

BARDA Director Rick Bright said the development of an adjuvanted COVID-19 [vaccine](#) promised "to end this pandemic, and help the world become better prepared or even prevent future [coronavirus](#) outbreaks."

The coronavirus outbreak has killed more than

120,000 people worldwide since the first cases were reported in China last December.

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