

German-Chinese coronavirus vaccine trial begins in China

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Clinical trials on humans have begun in China for a potential coronavirus vaccine developed by German pharmaceutical group BioNTech with Chinese company Fosun Pharma, the companies said Wednesday.

Seventy-two participants have already received their first dose following approval for the phase 1 trial from Chinese regulatory authorities, BioNTech and Fosun Pharma said in a statement.

The [vaccine candidate](#), known as BNT162b1, is one of four based on BioNTech's proprietary mRNA technology.

Another, BNT162b2, is being evaluated in a global phase 3 trial conducted by BioNTech and US giant Pfizer which started on July 27.

The phase 1 trial in China involves 144 participants who will receive two doses 21 days apart.

Those aged 18-55 will be the first to take part, followed by older people.

Laboratories around the world are racing to find a vaccine to curb COVID-19, which has claimed more than 700,000 lives and upended the livelihoods of millions.

More than 200 [candidate vaccines](#) are currently being developed with roughly two dozen at the stage of [clinical trials](#) with human volunteers.

Several Chinese companies are at the forefront of the global vaccine race, while Russia has said it hopes to be the first in the world to produce a [vaccine](#) for the public, with a target date of September.

But the medicines will likely face heightened scrutiny given that the regulatory systems in both countries are far more opaque than they are in the West.

On top of the BioNTech/Pfizer candidate, two other Western coronavirus vaccines are in [final phase](#) three trials: one produced by US biotech firm Moderna and the National Institutes for Health; and the other by the University of Oxford and Britain's AstraZeneca.

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