

France to get 1.16 mn COVID vaccine doses by year end

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France will receive around 1.16 million COVID-19 vaccine doses by year end, Prime Minister Jean Castex said Wednesday, adding another 2.3 million will arrive in the next two months.

The delivery of some 3.5 million doses will inoculate around 1.7 million people, with priority given to the elderly, the vulnerable and carers.

COVID vaccines are administered in two doses over several weeks.

The government will "be much more transparent in this phase of the epidemic's management," the premier pledged, after authorities came under fire over the distribution of tests and masks earlier in the year.

"We should not miss this turn in the road" to inoculate people, he said.

Giving a breakdown, Castex said France will receive around 1.16 million doses by the end of the year, another 677,000 doses around 5-6 January, and around 1.6 million doses in February.

France has ordered a total of around 200 million doses, which would be enough to inoculate 100 million people. The country has a population of just under 70 million.

Castex said that the start of the vaccine campaign was conditional on approval from the European Medicines Agency, expected on December 21.

"It is only at the end of spring that we will open the vaccination programme to the entire population", he added.

Another problem for the French authorities is that according to an opinion poll, only 53 percent of people want to be vaccinated, among the lowest rates in the world.

"We must remember that if a [vaccine](#) is authorised, it is only at the end of a rigorous procedure of tests and evaluations, both at the European and national levels," Castex assured.

France on Tuesday ended its second virus lockdown but that has been replaced by an overnight curfew from 8:00 pm.

Over 59,000 people have died of [coronavirus](#) since the start of the pandemic, according to official figures.

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