

6 Days Off Booze Is Enough for Russia's Coronavirus Vaccine, Developer Says

December 09, 2020



Russia is preparing to launch its Covid-19 vaccination drive this week. **Sergei Kiselyov/ Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine only requires patients to avoid drinking alcohol for six days, not 42 as previously recommended, its developer [said](#) Wednesday.

Health officials overseeing Russia's Covid-19 response urged Sputnik V recipients earlier to abstain from alcohol for nearly two months while taking the two-shot vaccine. Alexander Gintsburg, who heads the state-run Gamaleya research institute that developed Sputnik V, reassured the public afterward that Russia's vaccination drive did not entail a complete ban on alcohol.

Related article: [No Alcohol for 2 Months, Russia Tells Coronavirus Vaccine Recipients](#)

“It's just a matter of reasonably limiting consumption until the body has formed its immune response to the coronavirus infection. It's true not only for Sputnik V, but also for any other

vaccine,” Interfax quoted Gintsburg as telling journalists.

“We strongly recommend abstaining from alcohol for three days after each injection,” Gintsburg said.

Excess alcohol consumption suppresses the immune system, reducing Sputnik V’s effectiveness “or even rendering it meaningless,” he added.

“Of course we’re not talking about a complete ban on alcohol during vaccination,” Gintsburg said.

His suggestions contradict Russian officials’ previous recommendations to avoid immunosuppressants like alcohol for 14 days before and 42 days after inoculation.

Gintsburg had said that “a single glass of champagne never hurt anyone” shortly following Tuesday’s instructions of 56 alcohol-free days by Anna Popova, who heads Russia’s consumer safety watchdog and is a senior Covid-19 response official.

The varying alcohol intake recommendations come as Russia prepares for its Covid-19 vaccination drive this week. Moscow began vaccinations for high-risk volunteers in earnest over the weekend despite Sputnik V’s incomplete post-registration clinical trials.

Developers say interim results of Phase 3 trials show Sputnik V is 95% effective against Covid-19.

Authorities say around 100,000 Russians have taken the Sputnik V vaccine so far, including 30,000 volunteers and 8,500 members of the military.

Russia has the world’s fourth-highest Covid-19 caseload of over 2.5 million and the 10th-highest fatality count with more than 44,000 deaths, according to official daily tallies. Popova places Russia’s coronavirus death rate at 1.7% against the global average of 2.3%, though federal monthly statistics show Covid-19 deaths are at least double the official count.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/12/09/6-days-off-booze-is-enough-for-russias-coronavirus-vaccine-developer-says-a72285>