

AUSTRALIA VACCINATION

Australia Aims to Vaccinate Children under 12 in January 2022



This comes after the US CDC recommended Pfizer shots for broad use in the five to 11 age group. (AP pic)

Australia, quickly becoming one of the most-vaccinated nations against Covid-19, will likely start administering the shots for children under the age of 12 in January 2022, officials said on Sunday (November 14, 2021).

Health Minister Greg Hunt said medical regulators are still reviewing the health and safety data for the vaccinations to be administered for children between the ages of five and 11 and are unlikely to decide this year.

"The expectation that they have set is the first part of January, hopefully early January," Hunt told the Australian Broadcast Corp's Insiders programme. "But they're going as quickly as possible."

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) this month (November) recommended the Pfizer Inc/BioNTech SE shot for broad use in the five to 11 age group, after it was authorised by the Food and Drug Administration.

Australia had secured necessary supplies

Army Lieutenant-General John Frewen, Australia's Covid-19 Taskforce commander told The Age newspaper that Australia has secured the necessary supplies. "We have actually purchased sufficient supply for doses and boosters down to infants," Frewen said.

On Friday (November 12, 2021), Australia crossed the 90% single-dose mark for those aged 16 and over, with 83% having two shots. The country has also vaccinated 57.7% of children between the ages of 12 and 15, according to health ministry data.

Australia's high vaccination rates were key to its decision to partially reopen international borders this month for the first time since the start of the pandemic, despite ongoing Delta variant outbreaks in the most populous states, New South Wales and Victoria.

Despite the Delta outbreaks that led to months of lockdown in the two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne, the national tally of just 191,000 infections and 1,596 deaths is far lower than those of many other developed nations. – **Reuters, Melbourne, November 14, 2021**