

## A SHOT OF HOPE

# 'Oxford vax not only protects but cuts virus spread as well'

## Reduces Transmission By 67% After First Jab, Says Study

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The vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca not only protects people from serious illness and death but also substantially slows the transmission of the virus, according to a new study — a finding that underscores the importance of mass vaccination as a path out of the pandemic. The study by researchers at Oxford University is the first to document evidence that any coronavirus vaccine can reduce transmission of the virus.

Researchers measured the impact on transmission by swabbing participants every week seeking to detect signs of the virus. If there is no virus present, even if someone is infected, it can't be spread. PTI reported that even just the first of the two-dose vaccine can cut the transmissions of the virus by around 67%. The Oxford Vaccine Trial results, currently under review to be published by the *The Lancet*, also found that up to a three-month interval between the two required doses of the jab proved an effective gap as protection against the virus.

The Oxford and AstraZeneca researchers found that a single dose of the vaccine — which is being produced in collaboration with the Serum Institute of India — was 76% effective from day 22 to day 90 after the jab, which means protection is not reduced in the three months between the first and second dose, PTI reported.

The results, detailed by Oxford and AstraZeneca researchers in a manuscript that has not been peer-reviewed, found that the vaccine could cut transmission by nearly two-thirds. Matt Hancock, the British health secretary, hailed the results on Wednesday as “absolutely superb”.

“We now know that the Oxford vaccine also reduces transmission and that will help us all get out of this pandemic,” Hancock told BBC on Wednesday. The results, he said, “should give everyone confidence that this jab works not only to keep you safe but to keep you from passing on the virus to others”.

Some scientists looking at the limited information released cautioned that more analysis of the data was needed before such broad conclusions could be firmly stated.

“While this would be extremely welcome news, we do need more data before this can be confirmed and so it’s important that we continue to follow social distancing after we have been vaccinated,” said Dr Doug Brown, chief executive of the British Society for Immunology.

The encouraging results, lend support to the strategy deployed by Britain and other countries to prioritise providing as many first doses of vaccines as possible, setting aside concerns that people will get their second doses later than initially planned. NYT



**STRONG SHOT:** The study found that a single standard dose of the vaccine showed 76% efficacy from day 22 to day 90 after the jab