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Ebola Vaccine Approved for Use in Europe

Merck's Ervebo gets its first regulatory greenlight. A decision from the US Food and Drug Administration is expected in the next few months.

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Ervebo, an Ebola vaccine from Merck, received marketing approval from the European Commission today (November 11), marking the first such vaccine to reach the world's markets.

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"Finding a vaccine as soon as possible against this terrible virus has been a priority for the international community ever since Ebola hit West Africa five years ago," Vytenis Andriukaitis, the European Commission official in charge of health and food safety, says in a statement. "Today's decision is therefore a major step forward in saving lives in Africa and beyond."

Merck first took over the development of the vaccine after the Ebola outbreak in West Africa started in 2014. The immunization was initially designed by researchers at Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory and then licensed to Iowa-based biotech company NewLink Genetics. Starting in 2015, Merck conducted a highly successful clinical trial in Guinea. More than 250,000 doses of Ervebo have also been used during the outbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo that has been ongoing for more than a year, *STAT* reports, with the World Health Organization releasing data in April suggesting the vaccine protects 97.5 percent of people who receive it.

See "Uganda Launching New Experimental Ebola Vaccine Trial"

The US Food and Drug Administration is currently reviewing Merck's application, with a decision expected before March 2020, *STAT* reports.

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